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KNOWING THE MULE

FARING WELL IN MOROCCAN MOUNTAIN TOURISM



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DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Ailsa

Who taught me so much about love and the meaning of life

Who sadly passed away during my fieldwork

Who will be forever loved and missed.

Thank You.

To all those to whom I am profoundly grateful

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABTA	<u>A</u> ssociation of <u>B</u> ritish <u>T</u> ravel <u>A</u> gents.
AITO	<u>A</u> ssociation of <u>I</u> ndependent <u>T</u> our <u>O</u> perators.
AR	<u>A</u> ction <u>R</u> esearch
ATTA	<u>A</u> dventure <u>T</u> ravel <u>T</u> rade <u>A</u> ssociation.
BAIML	<u>B</u> ritish <u>A</u> ssociation of <u>I</u> nternational <u>M</u> ountain <u>L</u> eaders.
CAF	<u>C</u> lub <u>A</u> lpin <u>F</u> rançais
CFAMM	<u>C</u> entre de <u>F</u> ormation <u>A</u> ux <u>M</u> étiers de <u>M</u> ontagne.
CPD	<u>C</u> ontinuing <u>P</u> rofessional <u>D</u> evelopment.
EPA	<u>E</u> xpedition <u>P</u> roviders <u>A</u> ssociation
FFE	<u>F</u> ar <u>F</u> rontiers <u>E</u> xpeditions
GTHA	<u>G</u> rande <u>T</u> raversée de l' <u>H</u> aut <u>A</u> tlas.
HBCAW	<u>H</u> uman <u>B</u> ehaviour <u>C</u> hange for <u>A</u> nimal <u>W</u> elfare
IAV	<u>I</u> nstitut <u>A</u> gronomique et <u>V</u> étérinaire.
IML	<u>I</u> nternational <u>M</u> ountain <u>L</u> eaders.
IPPG	<u>I</u> nternational <u>P</u> orter <u>P</u> rotection <u>G</u> roup.
MIT	<u>M</u> assachusetts <u>I</u> nstitute of <u>T</u> echnology
NEWC	<u>N</u> ational <u>E</u> quine <u>W</u> elfare <u>C</u> ouncil.
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health.
PHAC	<u>P</u> rojet de l' <u>H</u> aut <u>A</u> tlas <u>C</u> entral.
RCVS	<u>R</u> oyal <u>C</u> ollege of <u>V</u> eterinary <u>S</u> urgeons.
RGS	<u>R</u> oyal <u>G</u> eographical <u>S</u> ociety
SNAM	<u>S</u> yndicat <u>N</u> ational des <u>A</u> ccompagnateurs en <u>M</u> ontagne.
SPANA	<u>S</u> ociety for the <u>P</u> rotection of <u>A</u> nimals <u>A</u> broad.
SPANA Maroc	<u>S</u> ociété pour la <u>P</u> rotection des <u>A</u> nimaux et de la <u>N</u> ature.
TMP	<u>T</u> he <u>M</u> ountain <u>P</u> eople
UIAA	<u>U</u> nion <u>I</u> nternational des <u>A</u> ssociations d' <u>A</u> lpinisme.
UIMLA	<u>U</u> nion of <u>I</u> nternational <u>M</u> ountain <u>L</u> eaders <u>A</u> ssociations.
VDS	<u>V</u> eterinary <u>D</u> efence <u>S</u> ociety.

ABSTRACT

The emergence of the mule's role as a beast of burden working in mountain tourism is founded on our appreciation of this species' great attributes as a means of transport in the mountain environment. Our appreciation of mules does not always extend to their care and welfare. This is particularly true of the mountain tourism industry in Morocco, where this study is situated. Why has there been a collective absencing of the mule from the consciences of those involved in this industry? In seeking to answer this question and in moving towards the question of how the mountain tourism industry can be more present to the mule and to mule welfare, this thesis explores the multiple ways in which we know the mule. Drawing on a ten-year engagement with the industry, extensive ethnographic fieldwork in the High Atlas and an Action Research initiative supporting tour operators as they develop and implement welfare policy and practice, this thesis explores how mule welfare can be viewed as emerging from a multiplicity of practices that, in failing to cohere, become subject to negotiation and ontological politics. An alternative community approach based on dialogue is evoked that might allow a consensus to emerge over how welfare should be practised. The thesis focuses on the quality of the relationship between mules and humans. It emphasises the importance of genuine meeting and dialogue and the need for spaces and places in which mules and humans can come together to identify how they can establish relationships based on mutual trust and understanding rather than on control and domination. In prototyping better relationships between mules, muleteers and their employers, this thesis offers the mountain tourism industry transformative pathways toward a more equitable and sustainable co-creative project.

INTRODUCTION

*My brothers, why is there a need in the spirit for the lion?
Why is not the beast of burden, which renounces and is reverent, enough?*

Friedrich Nietzsche¹

¹ Nietzsche (1982, pp. 137-140),

1.1 *The Mule in Mountain Tourism*

The mule's supremacy as a pack animal is legendary, nowhere more so than in mountainous terrain. Today, mules are for this very reason much favoured within mountain tourism. Their role and utility within this industry are widely acknowledged, but this recognition masks tensions between differing ways of knowing the mule and how she fares: The various practitioners thrown together, across time and space, for the purposes of a mountain expedition², each forms their own opinion of the mule's welfare and their widely differing socio-historical and cultural backgrounds accounts for the disparate set of practices in which the mule becomes embroiled. Considerable uncertainty therefore arises over what constitutes acceptable welfare, precisely because welfare is enacted within overlapping and often contradictory knowledge practices.

On expedition, the various practices and trajectories of the agency, tourist, mountain guide, muleteer and mule are drawn together, woven into "an immense and continually evolving tapestry" (Ingold, 2011, p. 9) that is suffused with light, weather, the rich aroma of aromatic plants crushed underfoot and the sound of hooves and boots moving over stony ground. Human feet carry the visitors, whilst mules, on hooves perfectly adapted to rocky mountain paths, make their surefooted way from one camp to the next. Labouring to take in the sights, smells and sounds that threaten to overwhelm the visitor, it is not always easy to spare a thought for the mules and their owners. The mules labour too: under the same sun, up the same gradients, across the same high cols and through the same scenery but under a very different load and for very different rewards. Laden high with all manner of items that the trekking team deem essential for the journey or could not leave behind, it is the mule who truly labours. Dwelling together, moving together, theirs is a shared journey; shared, but not the same.

The tourist is on holiday and their experience is all-too-easily romanticised. It is, after all, this escape from reality, this *dépaysement*, that is so eagerly sought. In appealing to the 'tourist gaze' (Urry, 2002), a reality is quite literally constructed by the industry for the consumer. Sometimes this construction is a harmless appetiser to the trek itself; at other times, however, it masks unpalatable truths and harsh realities. Tourists and the

² Within mountain tourism, the term 'trek' is also widely used. For the purposes of this thesis, 'expedition' will be retained as much of the work conducted as part of this project involved members of the Expedition Providers Association (EPA).

wider tourism industry thus often fail to see the negative impact of their activities on local communities, whose members are both human and non-human, and the fragile mountain environment that sustains them. The care-free thus become the careless or even the uncaring.

For the *montagnard*³, by contrast, life is somewhat more prosaic (Figure 1.1). The mountain environment is harsh and unforgiving and the *montagnard's* year-round survival hard won. Mountain communities are isolated and remote; if true geographically, this also holds socially, economically and politically. To survive and fare well in the mountains presents the visitor with significant challenges but these are short-lived and readily relieved by a return to urban living. For the locals, by contrast, they remain a lived reality, a never-ending struggle for survival. Members of these marginalised communities are all-too-easily rendered voiceless, misunderstood and maligned, their needs neglected or even denied by outsiders (Debarbieux, 2008). Mountain tourism therefore has the power to seduce the traditional agro-pastoralist with the promise of a diversified revenue stream and the possibility of a reprieve from toil and uncertainty (Cousquer, 2016; Funnell and Parish, 1999; Garrigues-Cresswell and Lecestre-Rollier, 2002), whilst also presenting age-old traditions that had evolved to cope with mountain living with new threats and challenges. The cohesion and solidarity of local communities is disrupted by the ideology of the market, fragile mountain ecosystems are despoiled and local labour, both human and nonhuman, find themselves exploited (Mahdi, 1999; Ramou, 2007). Caught up in their own cares, it is all-too-easy for these communities to lose sight of the mule and of mule welfare.

Where does this leave the mule? Invisible? Overlooked? Forgotten? How is the mule in mountain tourism rendered absent from mountain tourism? Perhaps more importantly, how amid this complexity, can different groups learn to care for mules better?

The exploitation of porters is well recognised within the industry and considerable progress has been made in promoting porter protection across the world (Deegan, 2002). By contrast, little attention has been paid to the needs and welfare of the

³ This French term, much favoured by Bernard Debarbieux and Gilles Rudaz (2010), perhaps best describes the identity, nature and character of indigenous mountain people. Where the mountaineer may visit and travel through the mountains, the *montagnard* is mountain born-and-bred. The mountains are to them birthplace, workplace and home.

muleteering team (Cousquer & Allison, 2012). Whilst there has been a recent surge in the attention paid to animal ethics and welfare in tourism, (Fennell, 2013; 2012a; 2012b; Markwell, 2015; Sneddon, Lee, Ballantyne and Packer, 2016), this work has tended to focus on general and theoretical aspects. Fennel (2013, p. 325) bemoans the lack of a comprehensive treatment of animal welfare and tourism in the studies published to date and, in the absence of such work, draws on “literature from outside the tourism field in defining the nature of animal welfare” and “in describing in detail our moral obligations to animals in light of sentience, pain and suffering, and methods to enhance animal welfare”. Markwell (2015, p. 1) remarks how, despite playing such an important part in our day-to-day lives, we often fail to register the presence of animals (and the by-products derived from their bodies) or relegate them to the background, echoing Wolch and Emel’s claim that “we have been unable to (even try to) fully see them” (1998, p. xi)⁴.

Animals, it seems, may co-habit the same spaces as us but we somehow remain blind to them and to the ways in which we have minimised our awareness of their lives and fates. This is significant, for awareness raising is central to the responsible tourism endeavour (Goodwin, 2011). John Berger’s oft-quoted line that “prophecy now involves geographical rather than historical projection; it is space not time that hides consequences from us” (1971, p. 40) challenges us to consider what spaces and spacings prevent us from seeing and what sorts of spaces and practices might allow us to see clearly. His reference to prophecy also provides us with an orientation towards and a focus on the future that can emerge through our choices as moral agents and communities.

The challenge, arguably, lies first in establishing an international mountain tourism community of which mules and muleteer can be members. The challenge lies also in introducing and integrating knowledge of mule welfare into this community and their practices. The welfare of working equines has received considerably more attention within the fields of veterinary medicine⁵ and animal welfare science. This has recently culminated in the publication of welfare guidelines for working equids by the World

⁴ They go on to say that “(t)heir very centrality prompted us to look away and ignore their fates”.

⁵ Reflecting the primacy of the equine patient in the early days of the veterinary profession (Bols and Deporte, 2016).

Organisation for Animal Health (OIE, 2016). The guidelines recognise that welfare is often poor because

owners lack sufficient resources to meet their needs or have insufficient knowledge of the appropriate care of equids. Certain working contexts, such as working in construction industries or in harsh environments, may present a particular risk to their welfare. (OIE, 2016, p. 1)

The mountain tourism industry employs mules across the World, from the Alps to the Andes, Himalayas and High Atlas and, where lack of resources, insufficient knowledge often coincides with a harsh working environment, welfare often suffers. This thesis is therefore my account of the journey towards a mountain tourism community that takes responsibility for the welfare of the mules it exploits, a journey that seeks to bridge the gaps that exist between bodies of explicit knowledge and the tacit-embodied knowledge of practice and explore the hinterland of self-transcending knowledge that lies beyond.

My immersion in the field and protracted engagement with the different actors whose practices give rise to mule welfare have allowed me to focus my research aims on understanding how mule welfare is co-constructed, emergent and multiple, allowing the claim to be made that mule welfare “enacted is more than one – but less than many” (Mol, 2002, p. 55). Thus, in the same way that Hinchliffe (2007, p. 6) suggests “that nature is practised in ways that are spatially multiple”, I argue that animal welfare emerges from the mule’s own ‘muling’ and the practices of those who work with and care for the mule. I now consider the multiple ways in which mule welfare is practised and the ontological politics that arise wherever these practices fail to cohere.

Mohamed and his mule



Figure 1.1a.



Figure 1.1b.



Figure 1.1c.



Figure 1.1d.

Mohamed is an old friend I have known and worked with since 2008. A respected farmer from the village of Aguerd n' Ouzrou in the Aït Bouguemmez valley, close to the souk town of Tabant, where the CFAMM is located, he has received no school education, speaks little French and supports his wife and three sons through his activities as a sedentary agro-pastoralist. He and his family are reliant on his mule as a means of transport within the valley (Figs 1.1a-b) and for traditional farm work including ploughing (Fig 1.1c) and threshing.

His mule also allows him to supplement his income by working as a chef and muleteer (Fig 1.1d) during the trekking season. As a chef, he can earn a daily rate of 200 MAD (£16) per day, double the rate available to those muleteers who cater only for the mules and not the trekkers. The mountain tourism industry has thus presented him with employment opportunities and allowed him to meet Western tourists. His lack of education meant, however, that entry to the guide school was never an option. His sons, by contrast, attend school and will be exposed to different ideas, influences and opportunities.

1.2 *The Multiplicities and Ontological Politics of Mule Welfare*

For Canguilhem (2012, p. 45), health is “not a scientific concept; it is a popular concept”. If this is true of health, I argue that it is equally true of welfare and further recognise the complex and implicitly ethical nature of what it means to fare well. Welfare is thus both heterogeneous and emergent and is perhaps best understood by attending to its various, often contradictory formulations. Knowing the mule, understanding how welfare is enacted within mountain tourism, and consequently how it could be improved, requires us to simultaneously foreground the practices that make up this industry and attend to the lived encounters between human and non-human⁶. This pragmatic and ethnographic approach to ethics (Driessen, 2012) ensures that we do not stray far from people’s moral experiences and motivations, allowing a rich and altogether fleshier account of this troubling part of our moral universe to emerge.

This thesis recognises that welfare “may differ between sites” (Mol, 2002, p. 43) and, if multiple, cannot be prescribed from afar but must be negotiated. Mules differ similarly, across space, place, time and the imaginary, raising “big issues for social scientists involved in understanding the life sciences when ontological forms are multiple and mutable (Davies, 2012, p. 636). These multiple ontological forms are slippery as salmon (Law and Lien, 2012), raising tensions wherever animals figure “within the relational lives, spaces and processes of animal farming” (Buller, 2012, p.156) and other animal practices. These tensions arise because the disparate forms of animal welfare arising in textbooks, legislation, and welfare standards do not cohere with the multiple enactments and complex practices of those who work with and care for the non-human. Is this a reflection of how they come together, of the lack of crafting and facilitation that goes into their assembling? What we can say is that, in arising separately, these forms whilst appearing singular are in fact multiple. It is the hidden differences incorporated at source that makes these multiple forms incoherent and that makes for fraught

⁶ The foregrounding of practices and the verb ‘enact’ are borrowed from Annemarie Mol (2002, pp. 5 and 41) specifically because I wish to focus on the way(s) in which the mule is known and the mule’s welfare handled and dealt with (i.e. enacted) within the practices of the muleteer, guide, tourist, tour agent, veterinarian and other key players within the mountain tourism industry. See also Hinchliffe (2007, pp. 174-175).

negotiations - assuming, of course that negotiations are undertaken downstream (Bortoft, 2012)⁷ rather than at source.

Negotiating downstream leaves us having to learn to live with this noncoherence (Law, 2004). This is, according to Hinchliffe (2010, p. 35), “necessary for good care”. Hinchliffe further recognises that “to do something is to assemble many wheres, and many practices, and to do it well is to respect the difference that others (including other species) and other places make”. Respect does not mean to tolerate, however (Cousquer, 2017, p.141) but rather to suspend judgement and seek to understand the multiple constructions that welfare takes to better facilitate their negotiation. This involves letting go of the expectation that animal care and welfare can be universalised “through legislation underpinned in all events and all places by scientific knowledge” (Davies, 2012, p. 628).

This thesis recognises the extent to which “our actions aren’t born out of seeing the whole” but follow “hidden assumed rules which manifest in habitual patterns of thought and behaviour” (Hagen, 1997, p. 87). External rules and regulations may be helpful when we don’t see but can, in many instances, represent a hindrance to seeing, binding our natural freedom of mind and preventing us from appreciating the whole and acting out of seeing the whole. By seeing a situation in all its pain, conflict, difficulty and contradiction, we are truly awake. This gives rise to a “knowing by means of interconnected wholes”, a “primary knowing” (Rosch, 1999) or “pure experience” (Nishida, 1990), that precedes subject-object distinctions and “in which we are present to our essential selves and what we must do” (Scharmer, 2009, pp. 167-168). Real knowledge is thus “based on the unity of subject and object - that is on love” (Nishida, 1990, quoted in Scharmer, 2001, p. 143) and “carries us into greater levels of moral development” (Hagen, 1997, p. 88). Downstream from this unity, lies the multiplicity of subjectivities that inevitably arise when matter and mind split, when knowledge, feeling and volition are unified within the activities and practices of the individual. Individual practices produce difference and incoherences, requiring us to attend to the multiple ways in which welfare is (or isn’t) enacted and the ontological politics and power plays

⁷ Bortoft (2012) argues that by attending not just to appearances but how things come to appear, we become aware of how we each contribute to appearances and of how these contributions then pass unquestioned because our focus is downstream and sources are neither traced nor considered.

that determine how further conflict between “universal approaches to securing animal welfare” and the “existing ethical, epistemic and economic framings” (Davies, 2012, p. 629) of animal practices are negotiated.

This study therefore deliberately moves away from normative debates and veterinary or animal husbandry informed technical solutions, privileging instead negotiated and dialogical understandings of welfare.

Instead of forcing a choice between solving principled dilemmas or searching for technical win-win solutions, the focus on practice means publicly engaging in a continuous combination of deliberative trade off and experimental learning. (Driessen, 2012, p. 167)

How are we to understand the concept of 'a negotiated understanding of welfare'? This question takes us into borderland communities in which humans and non-humans come to co-exist in a shared space (Wolch and Emel, 1998). I argue, however, that the use of the term 'community' is misguided here, given the extent to which the animal is neither seen, nor heard, nor accorded membership or a place at the negotiating table (Cousquer, 2013). Srinivasan (2016, p. 76) bemoans the “absence of the animal in political geographies and the absence of the political in animal geographies”, suggesting (p. 77) that “animal geography has tended to overlook the factors and processes which impinge on the broader status quo vis-à-vis animals”. This, Srinivasan concludes represents a “serious lacuna in both political and animal geography”, one that favours the status quo by placing “the onus on individuals and their encounters with animals without attending adequately to larger processes and systems that mediate these encounters”. This thesis recognises that animals are absented from negotiations, adopting a transformative approach (O'Brien, 2012a; 2012b) to draw the mule into negotiations, whilst recognising that ensuring they are represented still does not make them present. In bringing mule concerns into negotiations, in attending to the 'muleness' of their lives and the multiple ways in which their welfare is enacted within the practices of the mountain tourism industry, this study recognises that one can go deeper, bringing not just mule concerns in but mules themselves. The quest for better welfare thus yields at least two perspectives, representing two distinct negotiating starting points. One gives rise to multiplicity and to ontological politics whereas the other emphasises the importance of genuine meeting, attentive listening and dialogue, an approach that, for Scharmer (2001), builds on shared action (praxis), shared reflection and the forming of

a shared will (and therefore ontology) at a community level. These two alternative forms of negotiated welfare are now discussed further.

1.2.1 The ontological politics of welfares

The concept of ontological politics can perhaps best be illustrated by borrowing from Hinchliffe's evocation of the multiplicity of nature (2007, p.191) and substituting 'welfare' for 'nature': Welfares are multiple but this is not "a statement of perspectival politics or even pluralism." Multi-welfarism "is not relativism. The politics here is an ontological process, subject to various modes and forms of power, as things are pulled and shaped by numerous practices, in numerous places with numerous interrelations." Ontological politics allows the question to be asked: "how might a satisfactory balance between ... two realities be enacted? How should they be related?" and, as such implies "an attempt to reorder organisational and professional relations" (Law, 2004, p. 76). These questions allow the geographies and multiplicities of mule welfare(s) to be explored and richer understandings developed of how the exercise of power influences the extent to which any one version prevails over another.

The ontological politics of mule welfare are heavily influenced by power, including the power to decide whether to exercise power, the power to see, to listen, to attend and to act and to determine the extent to which one sees, hears, attends and acts.

Foregrounding practices (and specifically those of association rather than those of logic) helps us see more clearly for, in levelling the analytical playing field so that power becomes an effect, "power becomes less certain, less totalizing" (Hinchliffe, 2007, p. 174). We can continue developing awareness of how power impacts on the imposition or creation of ontologies.

In attending more fully to the mule and to the quality of attention paid to mules and mule welfare, an opportunity is fashioned that allows us to better understand the contested nature of welfare, a concept that sits "uncomfortably between scientific fact, social norms and individual subjectivity" (Buller and Morris, 2003, p. 219). This opportunity necessitates an appreciation of the different worlds from which the actors in mountain tourism are drawn, arguing that this is essential to an understanding of the problems posed when differing, or even incommensurate, views of animal welfare collide. Bringing these differing welfares together and placing them under tension,

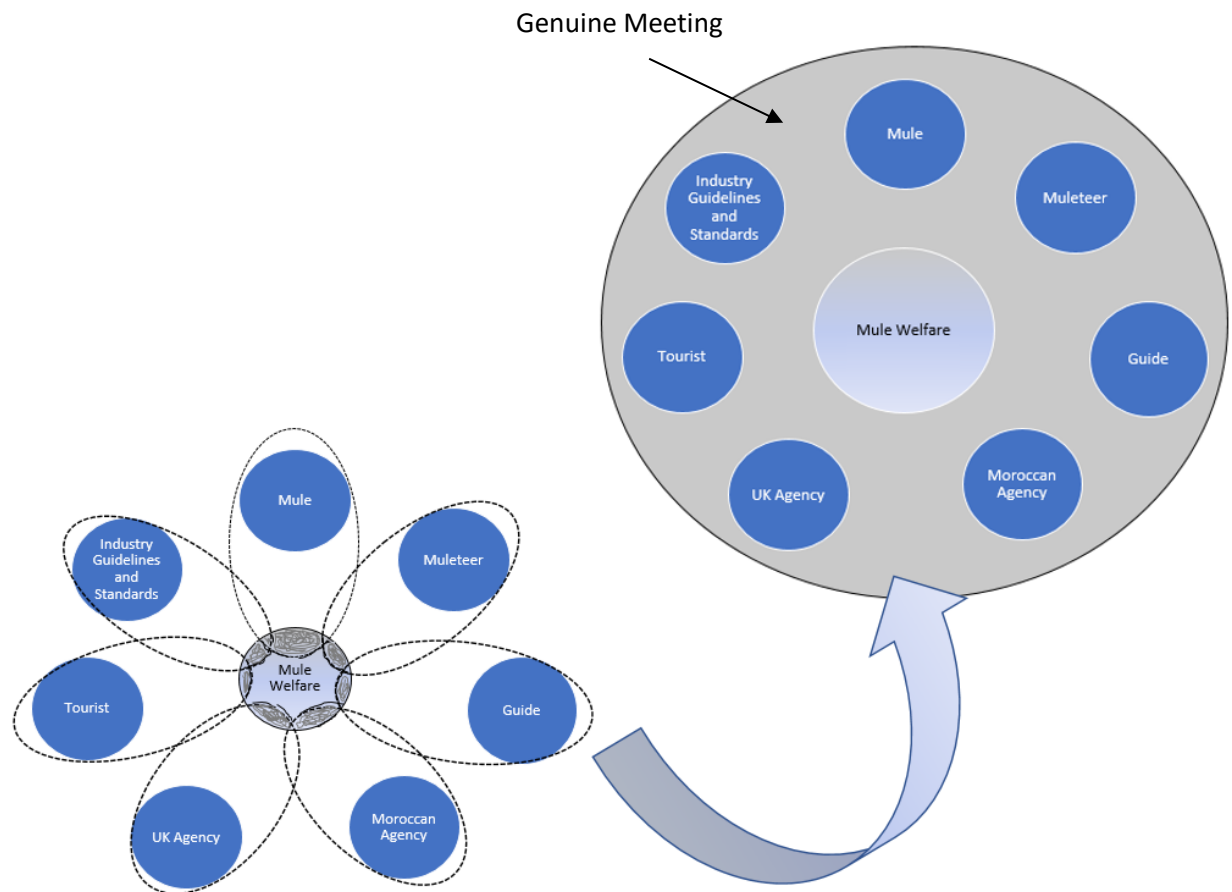


Figure 1.2: Moving towards welfares emerging through genuine meeting and dialogue:

Mule welfare is a heterogeneous, complex and contested concept that is enacted within overlapping practices. These are brought into contact, and sometimes conflict, within the mountain tourism industry. These practices and the welfares⁸ they enact overlap⁹ but are, however, shifting and emergent, as suggested by the use of dotted margins¹⁰. Moving from an awareness of the welfare enacted within each of the bubbles to an awareness of the ways in which welfare is co-created requires the system to see itself and those involved to see themselves as part of that system. The welfare that emerges when all involved engage in dialogue rather than monologues and debates¹¹ allows the existing impoverished welfare of mules to evolve towards a richer, more holistic welfare¹².

⁸ Each practitioner enacts a version of mule welfare and it is this welfare, rather than the practice per se that is represented by each of the oblongs or 'bubbles'.

⁹ Not all the overlaps (actual or possible) are shown.

¹⁰ Some of these boundaries and groupings could be redrawn in order, for example, to place more emphasis on the mule and muleteer as a team or to place more emphasis on the role of industry, societal, legal and professional norms.

¹¹ These impoverished conversations are represented by the greyed areas where practices overlap.

¹² This is represented by the mule welfare circle's growing as the system moves towards its highest future possibility. This happens as awareness grows and the grey shaded area comes to include genuine, respectful dialogical contributions from all parties.

renders porous the bubbles in which they each exist and challenges those involved to see more clearly. I further recognise the value of heterogeneity and therefore choice in developing moral wisdom and propose that an awareness of the precepts of welfare born of seeing the mule more fully, allows those involved in the mountain tourism industry to see their own roles more clearly and, in exercising their power to negotiate ontologies more wisely, take responsibility for mule welfare. To develop this further, we need to engage with ideas of collective responsibility; this takes us on a journey from ego-system to eco-system awareness and allows us to consider the welfare born of dialogue and community (Figure 1.2).

1.2.2 *Welfare as a product of dialogue and community*

To understand the concept of 'negotiation' better we need to relate it to that of 'community' and the distribution of tasks. Otto Scharmer is one of the foremost experts in leadership for a more sustainable world. He has, with his colleagues at MIT¹³, advanced our understanding of reflective practice, undertaking pioneering work into the theory and practice of profound innovation and systems change at the level of business, government and civil society. For Scharmer (2001, p. 145) "only when distributed work is perceived as a shared body of action can the intangible nature of community evolve and manifest". *Communities of practice* (Cousquer and Alyakine, 2014b; Wenger, 1998) revolve around what people do together, *communities of reflection* revolve around what people reflect on and think about together, whilst *communities of commitment* (Kofman and Senge, 1993) and communities of creation revolve around what people care about and want to create. Scharmer (2001, pp. 145-146) warns us, however, that most discussions do not create community and do not give rise to a shared will because "negotiating objectives starts where it ends: with negotiating objectives" whereas "shared will formation starts with subjective reality and ends with objective realities".

What does this mean for the development of a negotiated understanding of welfare? Those working in science studies have "tried to nudge us to consider not only the complex past or histories of objects, species, and assemblages, but also to emphasise their complex presents" (Hinchliffe, 2010, p. 35). I argue that this is still not enough and

¹³ Including Peter Senge, Edgar Schein and Donald Schön.

that we need to be aware that the present is where the future is born. This allows us to dispense with anterior ontologies (Law, 2004, p. 51) and focus on the ontology emerging and crafted in each present moment. We must therefore remain cognisant of the choice between focusing on what has been (and is) and what could be if community were established prior to setting objectives. In doing so, we can demonstrate leadership by directing our attention to the future that is waiting to emerge through us (Senge et al, 2004, pp. 12-15). According to Scharmer (2001, p. 137), leaders need to access a new type of knowledge, one that allows them “to sense, tune into and actualize emerging ... opportunities” by tapping into “the sources of not-yet embodied knowledge”. This requires us to go beyond knowledge about things (explicit knowledge) and knowledge about doing things (tacit-embodied knowledge) to a third epistemology, that of knowing about the thought origins for doing things. This shift in epistemological focus privileges dialogue and allows the themes, questions and patterns underlying perspectives to be explored. By uncovering what participating individuals truly care about and what they really want to create, it is possible to reconceive purpose; this therefore represents an alternative conception of ‘negotiated welfare’, one that requires us to respect wholeness and movement as the core principles of knowledge creation in the type III learning infrastructures made possible by Action Research (Scharmer, 2001; Senge and Scharmer, 1997; Senge et al, 2004). Such places allow distributed labour to be turned into shared experience, abstract discussions turned into shared reflection and the negotiation of objectives turned into the formation of collective will. Crucial to the integration of these three epistemological domains is the degree to which community can be established and dialogue achieved.

The need to foster the sharing of perspectives born of dialogue (including that of the mule) with a view to understanding and transforming existing practice, led me to recognise that I was researching with research partners, not on research subjects. This realisation highlighted the extent to which the ethnographic approach that initially allowed me to understand the field was both limited and limiting. The need, both for deeper understanding and transformative change, thus led to the development of an Action Research methodology.

An Action Research approach allowed this study to better characterise **and improve** the different ways in which mules fare and mule welfare is understood (as a thing) and

attended to and enacted (as a practice), whilst also examining the sources that lie behind the explicit and tacit-embodied knowledge of different practitioners. This thesis therefore explores both the ontological politics of welfare and the possibility of emergent future welfares and welfare practices.

Having introduced the ontological politics surrounding mule welfare that result when a negotiated understanding of welfare is not born of community and the possibilities born of genuine meeting and dialogue, this introduction now concludes with an overview of the thesis, its research aims and structure.

1.3 Conclusion

1.3.1 Research aims and questions

Since 2009, I have been working¹⁴ to deliver an understanding of how mule welfare can be rethought and renegotiated as those involved in the Moroccan mountain tourism industry develop their awareness of how mules fare and of how individuals, organisations and the industry itself enacts and co-creates mule welfare. This immersion in the places and practices of the Moroccan mountain tourism industry represents a journey towards an eco-system awareness that explores geographies of invisibility, power, control and domination and how these might be re-configured by geographies of awareness and dialogue.

The establishment of genuine dialogue offers possibilities for improving the welfare of the mule and muleteer within mountain tourism. Exploring what the ‘good life’ for a pack mule might look like is no easy matter, however, especially when the actors within mountain tourism represent such widely divergent perspectives and practices. The mule, as a working equine, plays a vital role within mountain communities but is no longer present in the world the Western tourist originates from and is familiar with. The extensive historical (Daly, 1910; Essin, 1970; 2000; Guénon, 1899; Post, 1914) and modern (Brager, 2005; Cousquer, 2015) literature on mule care provide valuable reference sources for those who carry responsibility for mule welfare; they are

¹⁴ I spent five years working as an instructor at the Centre de Formation aux Métiers de Montagne (CFAMM) delivering training on mule welfare and best muleteering practice to trainee Mountain Guides. This work was funded by The Donkey Sanctuary UK. Its focus evolved to include agencies working in Morocco when the Expedition Providers Association (EPA) requested help in developing their own animal welfare policy and practice.

complemented by the various guidelines and standards produced by ‘experts’ and specialists in animal welfare (ABTA, 2012; NEWC, 2009; OIE, 2016)¹⁵. Local expertise is also available from those who know each individual mule best, the muleteer-owners, and from the mule. This thereby recognises the importance of a variety of scales, both geographically, that is to say “globally, locally and at the level of the individual body” (Cater & Cloke, 2007, p. 13) and temporally. It further requires “at least some acknowledgement not only of the agency of the animals themselves, but of the way that agency is differentially constructed or understood in time and place” (Buller, 2013b, p. 2).

A cross-party understanding of what constitutes acceptable welfare for the pack mule is therefore delicate yet necessary if stakeholders are to work together to improve mule welfare. This thesis therefore explores these tensions and the various ways in which the mule is attended to and understood. In doing so, it seeks to understand how the mule in mountain tourism is rendered absent and could be rendered present¹⁶, recognising the need for this study’s research questions to be articulated and posed in ways that allow the emergent nature of mule welfare within different practices to be explored:

What is mule welfare, when, where and for whom? More specifically, how is mule welfare enacted within the different practices that make up mountain tourism?

Where do these different versions of mule welfare originate from, how do they overlap and what happens when they meet?

How can these versions of welfare be better negotiated?

¹⁵ The Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) Animal Welfare Guidelines for working animals is one of five guidance manuals covering the use of animals in tourism. It draws on the expertise of a number of Non-Governmental Organisations, including the Born Free Foundation and the Brooke. The third edition of the National Equine Welfare Council (NEWC) guidelines provide clear guidance on what is expected in terms of equine welfare within the equine industry, in the UK. As such, it reflects legislative changes brought in under the 2006 Animal Welfare Acts and is used as a reference document for many local authorities, police forces and welfare organisations involved in horse welfare investigations.

¹⁶ The cycles of absencing and presencing are explained in detail in Chapter 4, see also p. 92.

1.3.2 Thesis overview

Chapters Two and Three review the literature and empirical contexts that underpin this work, providing an understanding of the many ways we can know the mule and how she fares and establishing how the relationship we co-create with her is born of how we meet, our intentions and the way we attend. Martin Buber's life-work on dialogue is introduced and its importance to this change-focussed Action Research work emphasised. This helps us appreciate the value of *I-Thou* encounters and how they change who we are and can better inform our actions in the objective world of *I-It*. These two word-pairs represent, for Buber, two fundamental ways of standing and communicating in the world (Kramer, 2003, p.18). Their practical importance becomes increasingly clear in the empirical context chapter and is further developed in Chapter Four when the Action Research methodology giving rise to sustainable change through generative dialogue is more fully elaborated.

The four empirical chapters take us on a journey through the relationships that the mule is caught up in. The first focuses on the relationship mediated by the traditional bit. The second explores the relationship(s) that emerge when mechanical and psychological control are forsaken in favour of dialogue. The third explores the precarious nature of the working lives of muleteers and how their muleteering practices influence how they know the mule and enact welfare, whilst the fourth tackles the practices of the agencies who exploit the mules and muleteers as, for the first time, they develop and implement mule welfare policies. Each chapter allows the nature of the relationship between man and mule to be viewed through the lens provided by different enactments of welfare- that made possible by the traditional bit, through dialogue and through the co-seeing, co-sensing and co-creative journeys undertaken with muleteers and agencies and the shifts in awareness arising from improvements in their ability to listen to self, others and the system.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Knowing the Mule, Knowing Welfare

Si nous étions attentifs au regard que les chevaux portent sur notre façon de les «aimer», nous changerions notre comportement à leur égard.

Pierre Enoff¹⁷

This literature review starts with a historical account of the human-horse relationship and explores how our understanding of how we know the equine has been revolutionised by developments across several disciplines, including the science and practice of equine behaviour and welfare, animal studies and story-telling. This account develops an awareness of how we have constructed the human-equine relationship and how the uneven distribution and abuse of power has sculpted that relationship. That sculpture remains a work in progress, benefiting from new insights into how dialogue can be established and the equine known as a being rather than as an object of exploitation. As Enoff points out, if we were conscious of the way equines might view our way of “loving” them, we would the crafting of relationships as an act of love. Knowing the mule, attending to them and to how welfare is enacted and how different ways of doing the good are negotiated, allows us the opportunity to trace different possibilities. As Acompara (2006, p. 3) puts it “some of the most historically influential moral thinking has occurred in the mode of prophetic illumination ... rather than in the vein of analytical argumentation or foundational deduction.” This review traces how our relationship is evolving away from one founded on our mastery and exploitation of the equine and towards a more dialogical encounter in which the inner life of the equine is recognised and respected.

¹⁷ Enoff (2014, p.20). Translation: “If we were attentive to how horses view our way of ‘loving’ them, we would change the way we behave towards them”.

2.1 *Knowing the mule*

To know is to have knowledge about. *To know*: two words that conceal the ends to which that knowledge is used. To “know about” (Smith 2011) allows us to use knowledge to our own ends, to exploit not just the knowledge but that which we have knowledge about. To suspend our intentions, to know without ends, is different. It leads us to see and care about the other and therefore to question our intentions. When that other is an equine, whether mule, horse or donkey, we are challenged to know both the other and ourselves. This endeavour has been part of our relationship with the equine throughout history. This chapter explores this relationship’s past, present and future in order to deliver a better understanding of what it is to know the mule (and the mule’s cousin, the horse)¹⁸.

2.1.1 *From domination to dialogue*

The domestication of the horse and other equines (including mules and donkeys) provided horsepower and a means of transport that revolutionised the way humans could farm the land, control and trade resources, travel and fight each other (Bendrey, 2012; Hallberg, 2008; Hall, 2005; Levine, 2005; 1999; Mitchell, 2015). According to Buffon (1791, p. 306), “the reduction of the horse to a domestic state is the greatest acquisition from the animal world, which was ever made by the art and industry of man”. The term ‘reduction’, however, hints at the manner in which such a powerful creature came to be, not domesticated, but ‘dominated’ (Baratay, 2003, p. 21). Vignes (2011) suggests that domestication represents the ultimate phase of the intensification of the relationship between animals, plants and humans. He further hints that such domination only became possible for animistic and totemic human societies when they abandoned the view that they existed on the same hierarchical level, changing “their horizontal conception of the World into a vertical one” (2011, p. 178). This suggests a shift in the relationship from one of equals to one of subjugation.

¹⁸ The mule is a hybrid, whose mother is a mare and father a donkey. The opposite crossing (donkey mother x horse father) gives rise to the hinny.

Buffon praises the horses' perceived merits, but in doing so, appears to paint over the horse's own intentions, preferences and welfare, creating an impression that horse and master share the same intentions, qualities and pleasures:

Equally intrepid as his master, he encounters danger and death with ardour and with magnanimity. He delights in the noise and tumult of arms, and annoys the enemy with resolution and alacrity. But it is not in perils and conflicts alone that the horse willingly co-operates with his master... (1791, p. 306)

The stories humans tell about horses thus render the horse's exploitation justifiable, admirable even. As Paolo Freire (1985, p. 73) points out: "the relationships between the dominator and the dominated reflect the greater social context. ... Such relationships imply the introjection by the dominated of the cultural myths of the dominator."

Elsewhere (p.71), he states that "in the fields as well as in the circus, the apparent work of horses reflects the work of men". The dominator is thus able to impose objectives on the dominated (whether they be human or equine) without the latter being aware of this or having much choice. It is then, arguably, convenient to deny the possibility of an equine having intentions and goals that could be aligned with those of a human. This makes their exploitation much easier to prosecute.

This does not mean, however, that the impact on the horse's welfare was entirely invisible. Buffon recognises at least some of the effects of the devices and practices used to dominate, direct and exploit the horse:

If sometimes permitted to roam in the pasture, he always bears the marks of servitude, and often the external impressions of labour and pain. His mouth is deformed by the perpetual friction of the bit; his sides are galled with wounds or furrowed with cicatrices... (1791, p.307)

These two quotes juxtapose the many ways in which humans have come to know horses and other equines with the invitation offered - when we detect signs of the real impact of our practices and actions on the equine - to attend to, know and care about the equine. Berger (2009, p. 21) commends Buffon's "tenderness towards animals which temporarily reinstates them as companions" at a time when the Cartesian division of body and soul had reduced the animal to the status of a machine. This leads us to consider to what extent the horse's experiences and welfare were accessible to Buffon and others and what might render it more-or-less invisible. How then are we to know

both the equine and the knower who claims to know the equine? What does this then say about the relationship that they share?

Historically, this relationship was founded on militaristic ideas and culture; a culture in which the male values of control and domination came to characterise the relationship (Birke and Brandt, 2009, p. 190; Enoff, 2014, pp. 13-20; Goldstein, 2004, pp. 107-108; Van Weeren, 2017). According to Hall, Goodwin, Heleski, Randle and Waran (2008), the “main aim of traditional training techniques is often stated as gaining control over the behaviour of the horse”. This is further reflected in Esterson’s (2014, p. 6) description of the bit’s role and purpose in which it is asserted that “fundamentally all bits have the same purpose: to allow us to control our horses better.” This should be contrasted with alternative characterisations of the bit (and alternatives to the bit) that place communication at the heart of the relationship, emphasising mutuality understanding and trust as essential constituent parts of the relationship (Cooke, 1999; 2002; 2011; 2013).

At times in human history, complete mastery of the horse was essential: Cunninghame-Graham (1981) tells of how crucially important horses were to the Spanish conquest of the New World under Cortés.

So all-important were the horses that Bernal Diaz specially enumerate all these soldiers (they were but thirteen in all) fit to be entrusted with a horse. ... So all-important were the horses to the Conquistadores that Bernal Diaz gives this description of them with their colours, merits and demerits, before he penned any of his inimitable pictures of the conquerors, even of Cortés himself. (Cunningham-Graham, 1981, p. 24)

Elsewhere he emphasises that “many a good soldier and many a wounded man owed his life to his horse” (p. 27).

Only the horses, and they alone, inclined the victory to the Spanish side. Their strangeness and the fact that ... the Indians thought horse and man formed one ferocious beast, gave them victory. (Cunninghame-Graham, 1981, p. 25)

Horses were unknown to the Indians, spreading terror and mayhem wherever they went.

This is well illustrated by the tale of a horse being tied up near a mare and the mare then led away. This prompted the horse to “neigh and stamp his feet upon the ground. The Indians were terrified at the noise he made and especially of his fiery eyes and

thought he wished to fly up and devour them. When Cortés saw their state of terror, he dismounted and taking Ortiz's horse by the bit, made as if he spoke to him."
(Cunninghame-Graham, 1981, p. 25)

It was the horseman's ability to direct his horse that allowed them to move as one and made of them such a formidable weapon. Control, however, was everything and this was mediated by the bit. In his writings about the Gauchos, Cunninghame-Graham asserts that such control was equally essential for these incredible horsemen, especially when riding among stampeding cattle and needing to direct their mounts with pinpoint accuracy under life or death conditions.

Those who were caught amongst the raging mass held their lives only by their horse's feet, pushed here and there against the animals, but still unmoved, upright and watchful in their saddles and quick to seize the slightest opportunity of making their way out. If by mischance their horses fell, their fate was sealed; and the tornado past, their bodies lay upon the plain, like those of sailors washed ashore after a shipwreck – distorted, horrible." (Cunninghame-Graham, 1981, p. 75)

In these examples, horses were highly valued and well cared for, but the imperatives of the battlefield and cattle stampedes appear to have limited the notion of care and how far it was possible to consider what equines might themselves experience, feel and wish for.

In more recent times, more attention appears to have been paid to equine welfare, the way we relate to equines (Hausberger, Roche, Henry and Visser, 2008), the values and ethics that inform our relationships and the stories we tell about the bond we share and the ways this is both honoured and betrayed. Varnava (2017) provides a fascinating exploration of the vagaries and value of the army transport mule in the British Army during the First World War, highlighting the received cultural prejudice in Britain of the mule as "a stubborn, temperamental and unreliable beast" (p. 446) and how this was reflected by the way the cartoons in *Punch* presented the mule to the public. Other sources counter this perception, however, emphasising an "awareness of the vital work done by mules and the affection that they and their handlers had for each other" as well as revealing the "real conditions, treatment and involvement of mules, and demonstrating that they were tireless workers and agreeable companions" (p. 446). Bieri (2008) argues that literary works such as Anna Sewell's "Black Beauty" (1877) created animal biographies that have allowed the reader to identify with the animal and develop a "sympathetic imagination" that allows us to empathise with the suffering they

endure at our hands. Élisabeth de Fontenay distinguishes between two ways of writing for animals, distinguishing between two types of author, those who make animals speak and those who speak of them:

Car après tout, ce *parler des bêtes* on peut l'entendre en deux sens. Comme un *génitif subjectif*: les bêtes parlent, disons que nous les faisons parler. Ou bien comme un *génitif objectif*: nous parlons d'elles. Je placerais ceux qui font parler les bêtes du côté de la *mimesis*, de l'allégorie, de la prosopopée, et ceux qui parlent des bêtes du côté de la *diegesis*, du récit, de la narration, de la description.¹⁹ (2008, p. 27)

There is thus a choice of narrative voice that can speak for and help us know the equine. These are to be distinguished from the animal voices produced when co-opting an animal into the human family and into spectacle (Berger, 2009, p. 25), marginalising their needs and turning them into human puppets, projecting “the pettiness of current social practices ... onto the animal kingdom” (p. 26). Animals are thus marginalised, not just physically but culturally; this represents a barrier to knowing. Giving non-human animals that voice is no easy matter, however, for, as Buller (2015, p. 376) puts it: “What is required are approaches to animals that do not rely upon wholly human representative accounts – the animal as it is seen (Derrida, 2008, p. 82) but find other ways of letting animals speak – the animal that sees (p. 82)”.

Murphy, in his call for an “ecofeminist dialogics” in which humans learn to read the dialects of animals, claims that “non-human others ... can be constituted as speaking subjects rather than merely objects of our speaking” (1991, p. 50). Donovan (2008, p. 50) argues that it is possible to pay attention to and study what is signified by such things as body language, eye movement, facial expression and habits, thereby restoring these absent referents to discourse “allowing their stories to be part of the narrative, opening in short the possibility of dialogue with them”.²⁰ This, however, raises intriguing questions about what form(s) that dialogue might take and whether there is a need for perceptive people to translate or otherwise plug the gaps that exist between our understanding of animals and their own lived experiences. It is to the filling of the gaps in any story that we now turn.

¹⁹ Translation: “After all, speaking of animals can be understood in two ways. As a *subjective genitive*: animals speak, that is to say we make them speak. Or as an *objective genitive*: we speak of them. I would place those who make animals speak on the side of *mimesis*, allegory and *prosopopoeia* and those who speak of animals on the side of *diegesis*, narrative, narration and description.

²⁰ How this can be achieved will be explored and discussed further in the methodology chapter.

Temple Grandin (2008, pp. 225-231) has drawn on her own perceptual abilities as an autistic to develop a similarly empathic understanding of how cattle can experience fear and panic in the abattoir environment and how this awareness can be used to transform the design of American slaughter plants. Despret (2009), in her critique of Grandin's work, recognises that whilst animals and autistic people may be visual rather than verbal thinkers (p. 7) and therefore "geniuses of perception" (p. 8), this suggests that being able to understand the animal and speak for them is something of an exceptional quality. These are qualities of attunement, empathy and listening but are they exceptional or simply unrealised possibilities? Grandin (2008, p. 225) argues that cattle and other animals think in pictures and that her own autism has allowed her to imagine herself in an animal's body and see things from their perspective: thinking in pictures without words, tuning into the fear that she believes is the dominant emotion in both autistic people and animals such as deer, cattle and horses.

Whilst the ability of words and pictures and therefore of story to help us see and care about animal suffering is undeniable, it is also easily dismissed as anecdote by those (see for example Hall et al, 2008; Waran and Randle, 2017) who argue that objective measures (i.e. 'scientific evidence') are required for us to know that an animal suffers. This reflects the perception that sufficient evidence is required to persuade practitioners to evolve (or transform) their practices, to change themselves. It also reflects a hierarchy of epistemologies in which our ability to see and feel an animal's fear and know they are afraid is demoted, whilst other forms of knowing are arbitrarily promoted. We thus end up with the proxy of cortisol blood levels being accorded more importance than the look of fear we read in an animal's eyes. This raises interesting questions about the criteria used, not for truth, but for sufficiency. How is it that we lose sight of people's willingness to disbelieve the evidence of their own eyes? Why is that responsibility for knowing is delegated to those who can see and (or?) gather persuasive evidence; how is it that we, as Hinchliffe (2005, p. 644) puts it, "divide human off from the non-human" and "matters of choice from matters of fact"? Hall et al (2008, p. 263) conclude their review of whether horses suffer learned helplessness stating that "there is little doubt that the techniques and devices used in the training and riding/driving of horses, as well as during their management, have the potential to place horses in a situation where they could develop this phenomenon." They suggest

learned helplessness in equines is akin to human depression (p. 261) and is characterised by unresponsiveness and lethargy. They argue that quiet, withdrawn (and even calm, bombproof) equines should not be assumed to be “happy” and “relaxed”. This represents a challenge to the orthodoxy that an unhappy equine shows obvious behavioural problems and encourages us to consider the subtler, harder to interpret signs that hint at a disturbance of their inner world. We are also invited to familiarise ourselves with the external factors that are likely to give rise to such disturbances²¹. They bemoan, however, the lack of “scientific work in this area”²². In doing so, they point to a gap in our knowledge, an ‘information gap’ (Brown, 2015, p. 94) and draw our attention to how such gaps have historically been plugged by those with vested interests and orthodox views. Attending to these narratives is thus as much about noticing how information is organised and strung together as it is about noticing how information gaps are plugged to allow a story to hold together. This is why alternative narratives can be so destabilising (Buller, 2013, p. 5) and disruptive. McManus (2014, p. 120) proposes that “orthodoxy may be little more than the heresy that won, and we are becoming more sensitive to the voices of the defeated”. In highlighting the gap(s), by listening to those who would listen to equines and give them the benefit of the doubt, compelling alternative narratives are made available. We no longer feel compelled to dismiss their story and can seek alternative ways of sitting with the challenges involved in understanding how (not whether or to what extent) the equine suffers.

In France, Pierre Enoff (2014) has articulated (and, through his own >40 year example, enacted) a particularly strong challenge to the traditional cultures and beliefs that have resulted in horses being broken, shod, stabled, denied grazing and social interaction with other horses. Birke (2007)²³ provides an account of the emergence of Natural Horsemanship and its arrival in the UK, concluding that the movement is, in many ways, a reaction against the instrumentality and brutality that exists in the horse-world,

²¹ This highlights the need to be aware of the equine (what they are showing and how we sense this), of the equine’s lived environment (and how that might impact the equine) and how we interpret this information as we try to develop a deeper understanding of how the equine is living the experience.

²² They do not, however, question the limited “ways of knowing of positivist oriented academia” that Heron and Reason (2008, p. 367) “see as based primarily on abstract propositional knowledge and a narrow empiricism”.

²³ See also Birke and Brandt (2009).

advocating instead that we need to find ways of working with equines based on kindness and respect:

The growth of NH forces the horse's well being and relationship with humans into the spotlight: Whatever methods we use should take into account the horse's point of view. (p. 236)

Whilst the rejection of 'horse breaking' in favour of 'joining up' represents a revolution in horsemanship and a clear rupture with the exercise of force (Miller and Lamb, 2005), it is still, ultimately "concerned with getting into the saddle. Horse riding is its teleology" (Smith, 2011, p. 10). Treating the equine with kindness – and it should be stated that there will always have been some horsemen that were kinder than others – is, for some, still not enough. It is not enough to question how we do something, we need to question what we do and why. Letting go of any claim that horse riding reflects a shared intention, letting go of a pre-determined objective and focussing instead on what the horse might truly want means attending to the horse. This is beautifully captured by David Walser's account of Delgado's and Pignon's training approach to their Lusitano stallion, Templado:

Instead of saying to themselves, as they had done so far, "How can I get this horse to do what I want, albeit in the kindest possible way?" they learned to ask, "What would this horse *like* to do?" Then slowly but surely they built on what the horse told them. Instead of thinking of themselves as teachers, they had to become pupils. They felt they were entering new territory, one that could only be explored by an absolute determination to put the horse on a more equal footing with themselves and to abide by an immutable set of principles, based on respect and love. (Pignon, Delgado and Walser, 2009, pp. 17, 18)

This example of "relational practice not only eschews forceful dominance and the subjection of the horse by restraint, pressure and coercion into fearful compliance, it also advocates an appreciation of the horse as a sentient being whose interests and inclinations need to be respected" (Smith, 2011, p. 10). The interplay between the need to dominate and the need to care for and be kind has perhaps been present as a constant throughout the history of horsemanship (Morgan, 1962). With the arrival of animal behaviour science, a distinction was made between negative reinforcement (e.g. pressure and release) and positive reinforcement techniques (e.g. clicker training and other operant conditioning systems); see for example Foley (2007), Grandin and Johnson (2009), Karrasch, Karrasch and Newman (2000), Kurland (2007), Waran,

McGreevy and Casey (2002) and Warren-Smith and McGreevy, (2007). This has given rise to intense discussion about the relative merits of goal-focussed versus process-focussed approaches²⁴.

Methods of shaping horse behaviour through positive reinforcement, whilst gentler and more responsive (Grandin and Johnson, 2009, p. 135) cannot escape, however, “the critique of subjugating the horse’s natural inclinations to the actions the trainer wants the horse to perform” (Smith, 2011, p. 12). Such critiques challenge us to consider the extent to which the intentions of horse and human are aligned. Knowing the equine is thus a complex undertaking for it requires us to consider not only how (and how well) we know the equine but also the ends to which that knowledge is applied. Questioning the ends to which we exploit our power over animals reflects the increasing tendency to view and treat animals as subjects and the increasing attention being paid to animal’s capabilities and their moral consideration across a range of disciplines (Armstrong and Botzler, 2008; DeMello, 2012; Gruen 2011), including tourism (Fennell, 2012a; 2012b Markwell, 2015). In coming to know the mule, we therefore need to know ourselves, to be more aware of (and even free from) our historico-biographical past, our intentions, judgements and everything else we bring to the encounter. This awareness can, arguably, allow us to meet with and know the mule, mindfully, in the present moment.

This section has traced the evolution of the human-equine relationship and of the stories we tell about these relationships. Our need to dominate the equine and impose our own intentions and priorities on the relationship has seen knowledge about horsemanship challenged by knowledge about the equine’s inner life, their well-being and the cultivation of our own ability to see, understand and care about the relationship we create. Caring about the other thus gives rise to concern about the relationship we co-create together. The next section builds on this historical account of a qualitative shift in the human-equine relationship (from the “hard narratives of control and management to the soft narratives of care, respect and enlightened equitation” (Smith, 2011, p. 15)) to consider how being present to the equine contributes to knowing them and to their welfare.

²⁴ Process focussed approaches tend to respect core values as a priority over delivering outcomes.

2.1.2 *Embodied Knowing: Of Centaurs, Hybrids and Dyads*

Ann Game's (2001) exploration of the relationship and deep connection that can develop between a horse and a human, allows her to propose that "we are always already part horse and horses part human; there is no such thing as pure horse or pure human. The human body is not simply human" (p. 1). Game emphasises that "people who live with animals experience connectedness and cross-species communication daily" (pp. 1-2) and, arguably, shatters any illusions that we might have that we are separate from the other and unable to communicate or connect across the species divide. The capacity we have for 'horseness' goes beyond a process of entraining, of tuning into one another. It is what Gaston Bachelard (1969, pp. 14-15) described as an 'inhabitation', when horse and rider come to inhabit riding. And, when the rider achieves "the ideal of a horseman who knows full well that he will never be unseated" (Bachelard, 1971, p. 31), a true humility is reached for the rider has surrendered to the Self and has become one with the horse. Game describes this moment of connection, of flow²⁵, as a 'rapture' (2001, p. 10) and declares that "Connectedness in living the image of the centaur comes of opening ourselves to the otherness of horse and letting go of self in order to be open to a connecting spirit."

Birke and Hockenhull (2015) build on some of these ideas when proposing that the horse-human unit can be viewed as a hybrid, or dyad, in order to include horses as participants in their studies. The development of these ideas draws on feminist theory²⁶ and, in particular, Birke's earlier work on performativity in which parallels are drawn between the discourses of gender / sexuality and animality (Birke, Bryld and Lykke, 2004, p. 168). The idea of 'animaling' is introduced to describe how we culturally produce the human/animal divide. The fact that humans construct this divide linguistically and culturally is emphasised and we are reminded that animals do not participate in the creation of this gap - at least from a linguistic point of view.

Linguistic boundaries ..., can be and are maintained by humans in relation to animals. If we shift the focus from groups of individuals, to relationships, we can focus on the human/animal as a kind of hybrid, that exists in the spaces between the two, and

²⁵ This term should be understood in the sense used by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1991; 1997)

²⁶ See also Geiger and Hovorka (2015) who apply a "feminist posthumanist iteration of performativity to illustrate and explain who the donkey is, what they experience, and the context within and through which these performances are constituted" (p.1098).

which - as a kind of hybrid - can maintain boundaries with other similar hybrids. Like queering, 'animating' is a discursive process, operating between these human/animal conjunctions (thus no longer across the border of those who use speech and those who do not). For example, how the term 'animal' operates will differ between a human-and-guide-dog dyad and (say) a human-trapping-rats dyad; the relationship between human and non-human is very different in each case. (Birke et al, 2004, p. 170)

Birke et al emphasise that there are actually three kinds of performance and performativity and that this can:

... move us beyond representation, by taking a closer look at the participation of the animal actors, and focussing on the performativity of the two participants in relationship that transcends both - a higher order phenomenon. Thus there are three kinds of performativity here - of animality, of humanness, *and of the relationship between the two*. (2004, p. 176)

The relationship is, arguably, not just one of co-being and intra-action (Maurstad, Davis and Cowles, 2013); it is one of co-creation. It is what is created together. The self is allowed to slip away and is replaced by oneness. Drawing on the grammar of the social field, proposed by Scharmer (2011, pp. 231-260), this 'letting go' and a 'letting come' is the essence of presencing. It should be noted that the concept of the 'centaur' also figures strongly in the humanistic approach to Action Research (Rowan, 2006, pp. 106-108). This emphasises the transpersonal as a form of psycho-spiritual development that concerns itself with experiences that involve "an expansion or extension of consciousness beyond the usual ego boundaries and beyond the limitations of time and / or space" (Grof, 1979, p. 1555). The shift from the mental ego to the Centaur stage is marked by peak experiences that is considered a harbinger of change and transition; it is part of the call to adventure. In this case, the change or transition is an important one, both at the personal level and at the level of the mule-mule handler hybrid:

The name Centaur was chosen to mark the contrast with the Mental Ego stage, where the basic image is of a controlling rider (the intellect) on a controlled horse (the emotions and body), separate and distinct. At the Centaur stage we think in terms of bodymind unity instead. (Rowan, 2006, p. 107)

To understand this better we have to recognise the unity of living source across species that gives rise to multiplicity in unity. Difference, however, appears first and one is left struggling to recognise oneness. According to Bortoft (2012, p. 119), the "organism of the work is an inexhaustible multiplicity in unity of self differences, which are the work's own possibility of meaning manifesting in a variety of contexts and situations".

For Buber (2000), oneness comes first and comes to develop a separate identity, as objectifying relationships are formed²⁷. The resulting *I-It* seeks and is capable of returning to the inborn *Thou*. For Buber, truly becoming a human person requires us to meet the World as *Thou*. (Kramer, 2003, p. 29)²⁸. The embodied oneness that can arise between horse and rider may therefore represent an immanence (Smith, 2011, p. 16), a genuine encounter, a return to the *Thou*.

This transformation in human-equine relationships can be summarised as a journey from domination towards and into dialogue. It is so much more than that, however: In turning to the other, we are opening a listening organ within ourselves and letting go of our own agendas. It is this willingness to co-create rather than command and coerce that gives rise to what Buber terms genuine meeting and dialogue and Scharmer calls presencing and generative dialogue. It is to the knowing of such encounters that we now turn.

2.1.3 *Knowing as 'being with', as 'presence' in the moment, as attention*

In “Becoming Horse”, Smith (2011, p. 14) suggests that “if we place less emphasis on knowledge, as in knowing about horses and how we control and manage them and more emphasis simply on being with horses” a more dynamic, in the moment partnership may emerge. He goes on to explain (p. 14) how a state of “entrainment” or “coherence” is achieved when two organisms invisibly and pre-consciously align and balance their energies:

With horses, entrainment or coherence can become the basis of our relation to them when we put aside the self-awareness of trying to direct the horse, or otherwise controlling its movements, and put ourselves into the energetic spaces of prompting and responding to the horse’s motions. We engage in a connection of “symphysis,” not empathy, or sympathy, but a connection of felt, energetic resonance.

The idea of “symphysis” is borrowed from (Acompara, 2006) and captures the integration of all that comes together in our praxis (Grasseni, 2007), practices that are

²⁷ This represents the interplay between alternating ways of engaging with the other: meeting them in the realm of *I-Thou* and acting in the realm of *I-It*. These important ideas are developed further both within this literature review and within the methodology chapter.

²⁸ Whilst the World of *It* is necessary for human life, one who lives continuously and exclusively in the World of *It* does not become fully human (p. 74). A healthy alternation between *I-Thou* meetings and *I-It* mismeetings is interrupted when humans and institutions overemphasize or valorize the *I-It* approach to experience (p. 46).

practised and crafted in the present moment. Knowing is thus “a practical and continuous activity”, one that “is always bound up in one way or another with the world” as well as being “an achievement of work, experience and time” (Harris, 2007, p. 1). This raises questions about how we are present, both to ourselves and to the other. To what extent can we be present pre-consciously and consciously and how helpful is that distinction? I propose that it is helpful in the sense that we can be both absent and present and can usefully consider the multiplicity of ways in which we both absent ourselves and make ourselves available to the present moment.

Humans can claim access to different forms of knowledge about the mule. In some cases, a very specific and proximate knowledge (Ingold, 2000) is evidenced, in other cases, it is more distant or detached, privileging the cognitive over the aesthetic, affective or practical. Knowledge may be further characterised as innate, genetic or inherited (Jacques-Jouvenot & Vieille-Marchisset, 2012; Salmona 1994; Sens & Soriano, 2001) or contemplative (Rohr, 2016). Moll (2002, p. 15) describes the knowledge that cannot be deduced from language as ‘embedded’ knowledge²⁹, whilst Soriano (2002) characterises as ‘phoric’ the knowledge arising from situations where the uncertainties, trials and tribulations of rural life must be born with patience and fortitude.

Knowledge is born of experience, movement (Buller, 2012; 2015; Ingold, 2011, Lingis, 2003), dwelling (Ingold, 2000; Johnston, 2008) and other shared existence(s) (see for example Haraway, 2008; H. Lorimer, 2006; 2010). Knowing emerges within the various human, somatic practices in which mules become enmeshed. If we are to attempt to know the mule (or other non-human), the myriad ways in which non-humans, as purposeful agents, affect the lives of human-beings (Philo & Wilbert, 2000) needs to be recognised, whilst recognising that this may not be enough. Johnston (2008) argues that we go further in attending to their cries (p. 636) and recognising the “dwelt form of relationship that develops” (p. 643) when we share our lives with animals for such lived experiences can “encourage a responsible and informed anthropomorphism that might speak to a more intuitive animal ethics” (p. 643). According to Berger (1981, p. 21), “anthropomorphism was integral to the relation between man and animal and was an expression of their proximity” until the 19th century. Today’s increasingly urban society

²⁹ And specifically, ‘embedded in practice’.

means that that proximity to and familiarity with the natural and animal worlds have been lost. This need to reconnect with nature (and with animals) is deeply felt and sees the tourist seeking out wild and remote places (Curtin, 2005), where their views and perspectives can challenge and, in turn, be challenged (see, for example, Bertella, 2014).

So, what might it mean to know through dwelling, moving and living with a mule?

According to Buller:

Anyone who works with animals, plays with animals, keeps animals knows that it is predominantly through movement and through their embodied actions that animals negotiate with us and with each other. Movement then becomes more than functionality and physiological causation, more than agency, it becomes communication, interrelation and so on... (2012, p. 145)

Gooch (2008; 2009) describes how the Van Gujjar pastoralists walk with their animals, both during the period of transhumance and when moving from one area of grazing to another. The nature of this activity informs the way in which pastoralists know their animals. Laamiri³⁰, states that

Movement is an inner feature of human life and travel one of its most eloquent manifestations. As a human activity, travel has always implied a moving subject and by the same way, a moving consciousness. ... Travel refers to the idea of covering and experiencing space – but it is above all an experience of otherness. Travel moves identities and cultures across territories. (n.d., p. 2)

Movement, moving on, facing and overcoming challenges together, summiting, reaching camp and emerging victorious from the quest are as much a part of a contemporary trek as they were part of the Homeric expeditions. Faring well continues to require team-members to demonstrate practical wisdom (*phronesis*) and to work towards the common good (Cousquer & Allison, 2012, p. 1854). But how is this understood (and, indeed, misunderstood)? What does it mean to fare well and how is this affected by the imbalance of power relationships within the trekking team and tourism industry, not to mention the age-old divisions that have existed between humans and animals, nature and society (Hägerstrand, 1976), individual and society (Dewey, 1916; 1938), fact and value (Putnam, 2004), mind and body (Despret, 2004)? How does the mule's welfare relate to the common good of the mule-muleteer and of the trekking team and trekking

³⁰ In a presentation to the British Moroccan Society:
http://www.mbs.ma/En/images/Morocco_in_English_Travel_Literature_Conference.pdf

industry of which the mule is a member? What say does the mule have in determining what is good? Therein lies the crux of how we meet, of how we can come to know the mule? To what extent can we suspend our habitual ways of thinking or at least lessen, as Smith (2011) suggest, the contribution made of explicit knowledge? How close can we get to the other (to the mule), how close can we get to the “us” that mule and human can co-create, not in isolation but in context?

Whilst the role of intuition and of the tacit knowledge born of lived experiences and practices is, often dismissed, in favour of the privileged position of the mind, Tim Ingold argues that humans do not “live in a permanently suspended condition of contemplative detachment”; where “the animal is always and immediately ‘one with its life activity’, so is the human for much (if not all) of the time” (1992, p. 44). We are beings that both produce emotions and are produced by them (Despret, 2004, p. 127), making it difficult if not impossible to disentangle thoughts, feelings and actions. What we are left with is an awareness of the complex interplay of ways of knowing and of the contribution made by the passions to our knowing. Being one with is about integrating and balancing.

We are thus confronted with the challenge of understanding how to integrate knowing the mule and appreciating, caring about and taking responsibility for mule welfare. How does, to quote Despret (2004, p. 130), “the practice of knowing ... become a practice of caring?”

Knowledge of the mule can thus be acquired in many ways: cognitively, affectively and practically depending on the extent to which the head, heart or hand³¹ is engaged in the process of knowing (Brühlmeier, 2010; Sipos, 2009). According to Scharmer:

Opening the heart means accessing and activating deeper levels of our emotional perception. Listening with the heart literally means using the heart and our capacity for appreciation and love as an organ of perception. At this point we can actually see with the heart. (2009, p. 149)

Another way of understanding these different ways of knowing might emphasise our mindfulness of the tensions that exist between simple facts and the narratives and contexts in which they are embedded and come to have meaning. If, in addition, we consider how we access such knowledge, filter, interpret and use it; we can start to

³¹ Head, heart, hand has been used metaphorically to capture the differences between cognitive, affective and practical forms of knowledge.

appreciate the complex, multiple and often contradictory ways of knowing mules and their welfare.

Knowing is thus a complex phenomenon and I am mindful of the words of Nan Shepherd who acknowledged that “knowing another is endless” and that “the thing to be known grows with the knowing” (2008, p. 84). These words capture the multisensory, complex and profoundly meaningful way in which Nan sought to know the mountains. Living in the mountains, living with a mule, living with a mule in the mountains thus opens up untold ways of knowing and therefore of awareness. Heeding Buller’s call for “methodologies that are inclusive, troublesome, emergent and messy” (2015, p. 376), if we are to understand and know animals, I recognise that the challenge of this study lies, firstly, in crafting ways of accessing and locating this knowledge in order to explore “how far whatever it is that we know travels and whether it still makes sense in other locations and if so how” (Law, 2004, p.3). The second challenge requires us to consider the gaps in awareness, the ways in which we fail to see, attend to and know the mule. According to Donovan (2008, p. 51), there is always the danger that one might misread an animal’s communication, “that one might incorrectly assume homologous behaviour when there is none”. Care theorists, however, maintain that such “dangers may be avoided through improved practices of attentiveness ... a kind of discipline whose prerequisites include attitudes and aptitudes such as openness, receptivity, empathy, sensitivity and imagination” (Jaggar, 1995, p. 190).

What does it therefore mean to be present to, to attend? In the same way that Ingold (2010, S122) reminds us that “a mindful body that knows and remembers must also live and breathe”, we recognise that there are aspects of life and of being that we often fail to attend to. Knowing the mule involves becoming present to the other and to the World whilst learning to recognise when and how we absent ourselves (Scharmer, 2009, pp. 247-250; 266-268). In seeking to understand how non-humans are framed and categorised, the positioning of agents, their use of language and the ends sought must be held up for scrutiny^{32 33} In doing so, non-human orderings and ‘otherings’ are exposed

³² This involves being honest about who we are and what our intentions are. Such honesty is an essential part of seeing. According to Scharmer (2009, pp. 130-131), moving from downloading to seeing requires us to (i) clarify our questions and intentions, (ii) move into the contexts that matter and (iii) suspend judgement and connect to wonder. This will be discussed further in the methodology section.

³³ Being as one with the equine can have at least two meanings: On the one hand, it can mean communicating in a responsive way whilst maintaining control over the equine. On the other it can mean

and it becomes possible to question the authority of those who insist that “their statements are literal depictions of a reality thereby made manifest” (Law, 2004, p. 89). The animal turn³⁴ thus reconfigures the non-human as another marginalised group and unpacks human-animal power relations (Philo, 1995), thereby creating opportunities to rethink those relations. Doing so challenges the researcher to attend to the lived encounter, wherein, according to Donovan (2008, p. 48), “humans pay attention to – listen to – animal communications and construct a human ethic in conversation with the animals rather than imposing on them a rationalistic, calculative grid of humans’ own monological construction”. This is essential if we are to know the mule according to Heron and Reason (2008, p. 367) for whom failure “to honour the experiential presence – through premature abstraction, conceptualisation and measurement, or through a political bias which values the experience only of socially dominant or like-minded groups – ignores the fundamental grounding of all knowing”. The extent to which one can suspend habitual ways of seeing and open up an organ of seeing within that allows an *I-in-thou* awareness to emerge represents a significant barrier to awareness.

The lives and experiences of the mule and muleteer are such examples for they fade too easily into the background, their hard work and lived existences passing unseen and unrecognised. This study therefore foregrounds the mule and situates the mule’s role both within contemporary Moroccan mountain tourism industry and within the socio-historico-cultural context of the Berbers (Mahdi, 1999). In doing so, it seeks to recognise that each actor, each subject is “always already inserted into and shot through with alterity in the forms of social, linguistic, biological and historicocultural forces” (Calarco, 2008, p. 83) whilst also recognising and remaining “alert to the ways in which communities of people intersubjectively build up an understanding of how their worlds work” (Cloke, Philo & Sadler, 1991, p. 89) or struggle to work. In attending to the various ways in which they fail to work and the emergence of problems and dilemmas that reflect incommensurate, contradictory (Springsted, 1985; Weil, 1968; 1976) or poorly compatible, world views, it is concerned with the performative³⁵ presentations,

communicating as equals with intentions being mutually negotiated. The former allows for “ideological rationalisations that legitimate animal exploitation and cruelty” (Donovan, 2008, p. 51). The latter seeks to clear them away, clearing a path for the co-creative potential born of genuine meeting.

³⁴ In human geography.

³⁵ It is worth noting that Moll (2002, p. 41) specifically bans the term *performance* from her text, opting instead for a fresh, uncontaminated alternative. She argues that, in practice, objects are enacted and her preferred term is therefore *enact*.

showings and manifestations of everyday life (Thrift, 1997, pp. 126-127). These practices of trekking, guiding, muleteering, planning, presenting and selling treks and even of being a mule are “embodied, relational, expressive and involved with others and objects in a world continually in process” (Nash, 2000, p. 655). These hybrid agencies are thus formed when persons and things come together.

This account of the many ‘ways of knowing’ (Harris, 2007) that allow us to know the mule has emphasised the endless means by which knowledge can be created in the present moment. It emphasised the situatedness of knowing in time and place, the ways in which it is inhabited and embodied by the knower as well as its changing and emergent nature. Knowing is never complete for we cannot be all knowing. We must, however, guard against impoverished forms of knowing that lead us to see and act unwisely. We must, in short, distinguish between knowing well and knowing poorly. I can think of no better way to summarise this than by means of Martin Buber’s life work that distinguishes between *I-Thou* and *I-It* relationships (Buber, 2000). In the former, the *I* is open to the other and the mutuality and reciprocity experienced is dialogical. An *I-It* relationship is, by contrast, a “one-sided experience of knowing, using and categorising people and things” (Kramer, 2003, p. 42). According to Buber, the most powerful moments of dialogue occur when *I* and *Thou* meet: Genuine meeting, requires unconditional trust and a willingness to be vulnerable³⁶ to the other. Remarkably, one of Buber’s early insights into how we meet the other came, at the age of 11, from a dapple-grey horse:

When I stroked the mighty mane ... and felt the life beneath my hand, it was as though the element of vitality itself bordered on my skin, something that was not I, was certainly not akin to me, palpably the other, not just another, really the Other itself; and yet it let me approach, confided itself to me, placed itself elementally in the relation of *Thou* and *Thou* with me. The horse ... very gently raised his massive head, ears flicking, then snorted quietly, as a conspirator gives a signal meant to be recognisable only by his fellow-conspirator; and I was approved. (Buber, 1967, pp. 26-27).

Somewhere within this exchange, there is an element of non-judgemental awareness, of approval, of acceptance. This is a genuine meeting. When, later, the stroking becomes

³⁶ The singular importance of vulnerability is discussed in

pleasurable, something shifts, the other is objectified, judgement creeps in and dialogue ceases.

Buber distinguishes such genuine meetings (*Begegnung*) from mism meetings (*Vergegnung*). Only in the former do the most powerful moments of dialogue appear; these are transformative, leaving the "man who emerges from the act of pure relation" with "something more in his being, something new has grown there of which he did not know before and for whose origin he lacks any suitable words" (Kramer, 2003, p. 47). The next section builds on this to explore further how our availability, openness and attunement develops future-oriented ways of knowing that allow us to better know and care for the mules and other animals we exploit whether in modern industries such as tourism or older ones such as transport, agriculture and mining.

2.1.4 *Knowing as potentiality and transformations*

Bertella (2014 p. 116) argues that "animals can be included in the tourism experience network as subjects who play an active and central role in creating the experience". In her work on sled dogs, they emerge as agents whose interactions with humans "can be conceptualised as an on-going process of intra-acting ... a form of interaction in which the parties meet and change as a result of their meeting." (p. 123). She goes on to suggest that the tourism experience that includes the use of animals can be seen as:

An encounter where the privileged subjects, in the case of dog sledding the musher and the tourists, use their power not to dominate the other but to help the other to fulfil his / her potentials. In practice, this would lead to actions that aim to provide the animals with what they need in order to lead a more meaningful life. (2014, p. 123)

This is therefore an example of how two-way interspecies interactions within tourism (but also within other fields) can be transformative. It does not, however, tell us very much about how researchers (and humans more generally) come to know the animal and to understand what fulfilling their potential and leading a meaningful life might look like for them. To understand this better, we need to consider the nature of potentialities that can be authorised and realised when they become available in the moment.

For Despret (2008, p. 137), it is the breeders' "intentions, expectations, perspectives and exchanges of properties that ... indicate what animals become capable of in the

practices through which breeders proudly define themselves". Animals can thus avail themselves of an opportunity to step into a different future. Elsewhere, Despret (2004) emphasises the importance of becoming "available" to what animals can tell us as distinct from expecting them to answer any questions we might have prepared for them. This future-orientated approach recognises that speaking with animals does not involve language but the establishment of an in-the-moment understanding, a realisation of each other's potential in any given moment. This is perhaps what Jaggar (1995, p. 190)³⁷ means by openness and receptivity: By being available to the other, human and non-human are created afresh and can be created more imaginatively. For Despret (2004, p. 125) these are "practices that create and transform through the miracle of attunement", opening up new possibilities and identities. Despret's critique of Lorenz's work recognises that he uses his body "as a tool for knowing, ... as a means to create a relation that provides new knowledge" (2004, p. 128) and that the involvement of his body, his knowledge, his responsibility and his future constitute a practice of knowing that becomes a practice of caring. (p. 130); this represents "a new articulation of withness, an undetermined articulation of being with that makes us suggest that finally, when Lorenz talks of love, he does not articulate human words". But how are we to understand 'withness' and 'love' without words (or at least human words)? Perhaps the answer lies in recognising that experiential knowing (Heron and Reason, 2008) is, the basis of all knowing. It is in experience that we are mindfully present and available to the future³⁸. And yet, it is so often forsaken in the rush for propositional knowledge, a rush into premature abstraction that leads us into an impoverished world without passions, "without us; and therefore, without them ... a world of minds without bodies, of bodies without minds, bodies without hearts, expectations, interests, a world of enthusiastic automata observing strange and mute creatures; in other words, a poorly articulated (and poorly articulating) world." (Despret, 2004, p. 131). This needs to be recognised if mules and humans are to find ways of articulating better, where 'to articulate' is understood as far more than 'to speak with', encompassing all possible ways of communing. This brings us back to the

³⁷ See earlier reference on page 39.

³⁸ It is in experience that we can tune into what Merleau-Ponty (2003) describes as our "interanimality", Acampora (2006) as 'corporeal compassion' and Nishida (1990) as the 'intelligible universal'. For Scharmer (2001), this 'tuning in' gives us access to the sources from where thought and action come into being.

opportunities that emerge when we make ourselves available not just to the other but to transformation, to being changed by the encounter, to Scharmer's "self-transcending knowledge" (2001; 2009).

Despret (2004, p. 122) argues that "the clever horse gave to his human questioners the chance of becoming with a horse, performing a body that a horse can read, acquiring a horse-sensitivity". By attending to us, horses can communicate their intentions to those of us sensitive enough to recognise them. The question then is how do we attend or, perhaps, how is it we fail to attend? Being with, redirecting our attention to, caring for and loving are thus practices that allow us to speak with the mule (and others) without having recourse to words. Here I borrow the word attention from Iris Murdoch (1970, p. 33), who in turn borrowed it from Simone Weil, "to express the idea of a just and loving gaze directed upon an individual reality". How we attend, our disposition to the other in advance of our meeting thus determines what emerges from that meeting.

Expectations authorise certain realities; but, at any meeting, authorisation is provided by each participant, whether they are 'absent' or 'present' to the other. It is bidirectional, it is the dialogical encounter of two subjects not of a subject and an object. How much better might the emergent articulation be if both mule and human are present to each other whenever they meet? This, however, involves more than empathy: Where empathy invites us to ask what it is like to be the other, it does not raise the question "what is it to be 'with' the other" (Despret, 2004, p. 128), what are we creating together? In the same way that Despret suggests that Lorenz brought new identities into being by being *goosomorphous*, I ask what is possible when we allow ourselves to be *mulomorphous*? What is possible when mule-with-human and human-with-mule meet and articulate? According to Game (2011, p. 1), "the human body is not simply human. Through interconnectedness, through our participation in the life of the world, humans are always forever mixed, and thus too have a capacity for horseness." This allows us to live with and through another. It opens up particular organs of perception and of knowing. Thompson (2011) similarly draws on the centaur metaphor to examine the mutual attunement of horse and rider through isopraxic, intracorporeal and interspecies communication. What emerges in this recent work (see also Nosworthy, 2013) is an emphasis on co-creation (Buller, 2015; Birke et al, 2004; 2015) that we also find emphasised as a crucial element of work on transformative change

(Scharmer, 2009; Senge et al, 2004). The potential of such creative work to transform the ways we know not just the mule, but humans too will be explored and developed further in the methodology section.

This section has emphasised the singular importance of the future that is born in the present moment:

If there is anything still to be posited of the body, whether the body of human or horse, it is as a set of activities rather than a substance in its own right. Bodies are therefore always becoming rather than simply being, because they are continually constituted and reconstituted through their interactions with others in the world. Becoming body is a transaction that takes place as I am eating, riding my bicycle, making love, laughing with my child, stroking the silky back of a cat, etc. (Acampora, 2006, p. 60)

Future becomings imply future possibilities, an “immense continually evolving tapestry” (Ingold, 2011, p. 9) of encounters, options, choices, more choices (and here we include those that are hidden, unimagined, unimaginable or unspeakable), availability (Despret, 2004), playfulness (Whatmore, 2002), horse play (Smith, 2011, p. 17) and the suspension of rules and authority. Neutralising, if only temporarily, the forces that maintain existing hierarchies and orderings, makes play possible. It is, after all, in play that we can explore new ways of being.

In the same way that Ingold (2011, p. 12) questions why “art and architecture are at liberty to propose forms never before encountered without having first to describe what is already there” but “anthropology is committed to observing and describing life as we find it but not to changing it”, this section recognises the transformative and creative forces at work when mules and humans meet openly. A true science of being therefore needs to embrace transformation, creativity and, dare I say it, artistry. Any emancipatory project needs to be imaginative, needs to dream (Game, 2001) and pursue its dreams for to do so is to refuse to be defined by historical habits of thinking, acting and being. To imagine what a mule might say allows us to propose better questions (humbler questions), to be more curious, more interested in the other, more open-minded, more trusting and therefore worthier of another’s trust. The stories we tell are thus enriched rather than impoverished, providing we remain cognisant of the gaps in our knowledge and how these are filled.

A future-oriented knowing embraces the possibility of knowing afresh and anew. A dialogical ethic takes us beyond simply caring about the animals we know to caring about what animals might be telling us (Donovan, 2008, p. 49) about what they would contribute to any renegotiation and how we would attend to and heed them. Knowing mules in this way provides us with opportunities to make more informed judgements about their welfare; this process can become recursive as we come to know them better. This implicitly ethical positioning draws on a wide range of social and scientific ideas about health and welfare. In order for these concepts to improve our ability to know the mule and how she fares, this next section reviews the various ways in which health and welfare have been conceptualised. In doing so, a balance is struck between the concepts that have emerged through the work of philosophers and scientists and various corresponding ideas that have been identified within traditional peasant³⁹ societies. Ultimately, it is this dialogue between science and society (Miele et al, 2011)⁴⁰ that will draw together the various practices and inform a negotiated common understanding of what acceptable welfare for a working equine might look like. To develop this further, we now consider the concepts of animal health and welfare relevant to the practices of those involved in mountain tourism.

2.2 *Concepts of Animal Health and Welfare*

Those involved in mountain tourism, whether they be guides, muleteers, tourists, animal welfare charities or, in my own case, a guide, veterinarian and sometime tourist each have their own view of what it is to be a mule and what it might mean for the mule to fare well, or indeed have a good life. They each 'read' the mule differently. Here readings are to be understood as multiple and flawed. A synthetic unity of opposed readings is what is aimed at here. This can only be achieved when one realises that readings are not to be simply juxtaposed. A good reading requires that the limited nature of each individual's reading be fully recognised and a non-reading arrived at in which the particulars of the reading subject are denied (see Springsted, 1985, pp. 9-10).

³⁹ This has been chosen because, as Berger (1980, p. 36) points out they are "the only class who, throughout history, has remained familiar with animals and maintained the wisdom that accompanies that familiarity". Ingold (1994, p. 56) clarifies this further, suggesting that Berger means "peasant farmers" to which he "would add pastoralists".

⁴⁰ "Animal welfare: establishing a dialogue between science and society" is the title of a seminal paper in the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) journal *Animal Welfare*.

In practice, it is often difficult to establish comprehensive definitions of 'health' and 'welfare' or a list of needs beyond food water, rest and ... shoes!! Definitions of 'good health' tend to lack detail, precision and coherency, reflecting different ways of relating to the body and of determining whether it is healthy, but also the primacy of the act and of practice over knowledge⁴¹, of the sort of knowledge that renders practice into words (Jacques-Jouvenot & Vieille-Marchiset, 2012, pp. 13-15). We are thus reminded that "health is not a scientific concept, it is a popular concept" (Canguilhem, 2012, p. 44) and that there are different conceptions of what it means to fare well and be healthy reflecting the opposition between traditional and scientific ontologies.

Recognising that these understandings make sense from within a given practice (that of the tourist, guide, muleteer or attending veterinary surgeon) but "may not be able to ... meet a demand for justification made by someone standing outside those practices" (Williams, 1985, p. 114), I now consider some of the ways in which health and welfare have been theorised in order to better understand how these theories relate to the more popular, practical concepts and concerns of the different actors within the mountain tourism industry.

The following provides a brief account of the clinical⁴², scientific and popular conceptions of health and welfare, acknowledging that, even amongst the scientific community, there are many ways to construct an understanding of what it means to be healthy and to fare well. These reflect the bases upon which such constructions are founded, requiring us to consider the moral and social status of the animal, but also what it is to be an animal (Calarco, 2008; Ingold, 1994).

⁴¹ Thus: «Un savoir appris est un savoir qu'on ne sait plus qu'on sait, qu'on a sans le savoir» (Jacques-Jouvenot & Vieille-Marchiset, 2012, p. 14). Learning is knowledge that we no longer know that we know. In the case of health, knowledge of whether one is healthy or an animal is healthy may be tacit knowledge that cannot be put into words. Similarly, Johnston (2008, p. 642) argues that "the shift from scientific to aesthetic knowledge prescribes that what something scientifically is may matter little if the truth of its encounter is understood practically."

⁴² This starting point reflects and recognises my own background. A reflexive approach to this work requires that this be fully accounted for and ideally transcended.

2.2.1 Clinical concepts of health and welfare

The concept of animal welfare is, for a veterinarian, something that can be measured and about which (s)he feels qualified to offer an expert opinion. Indeed, in many cruelty cases, vets are often called as expert witnesses (Cooper & Cooper, 2008). Their authority and professional opinion are informed judgements, founded on their ability to undertake a thorough clinical examination, during which pathological signs are identified and interpreted. These signs are viewed as departures from a state of health and welfare. The nature of these two concepts is, however, left unquestioned and viewed as unproblematic.

Parameters have been established for working equines that provide an objective evaluation of the animal's welfare (Burn et al, 2010; Pritchard et al, 2005; 2008). Such animal-based (direct) welfare assessments have the merit of measuring the "welfare status that is most relevant to the animal itself" and "are particularly appropriate to situations where resource examination is not practical" (Pritchard et al, 2005, p. 267). By contrast, indirect measurements consider the provision of resources such as food, water and shelter. Both are problematic. In the case of direct assessments, significant differences have been shown to exist between assessments made by different observers with these being attributed to the high prevalence of certain results (Burn et al, 2009). Indirect assessments, meanwhile, only point out risk factors that can give rise to welfare problems (Pritchard et al, 2005).

Expert clinical assessments typically must be undertaken rapidly (Burn et al, 2009, p. 177). They therefore are implicitly simplistic and reductive and involve the measurement of parameters that, it is claimed, correlate with poor health and welfare. The 'hand' evaluation proposed by the Donkey Sanctuary (Figure 2.1) is, by contrast, more holistic and allows a range⁴³ of welfare considerations to be captured (Blakeway and Cousquer, forthcoming; Cousquer, 2015; Galindo et al, 2017).

⁴³ These are not necessarily quantitative. They can be biographical and allow qualitative aspects to be captured.

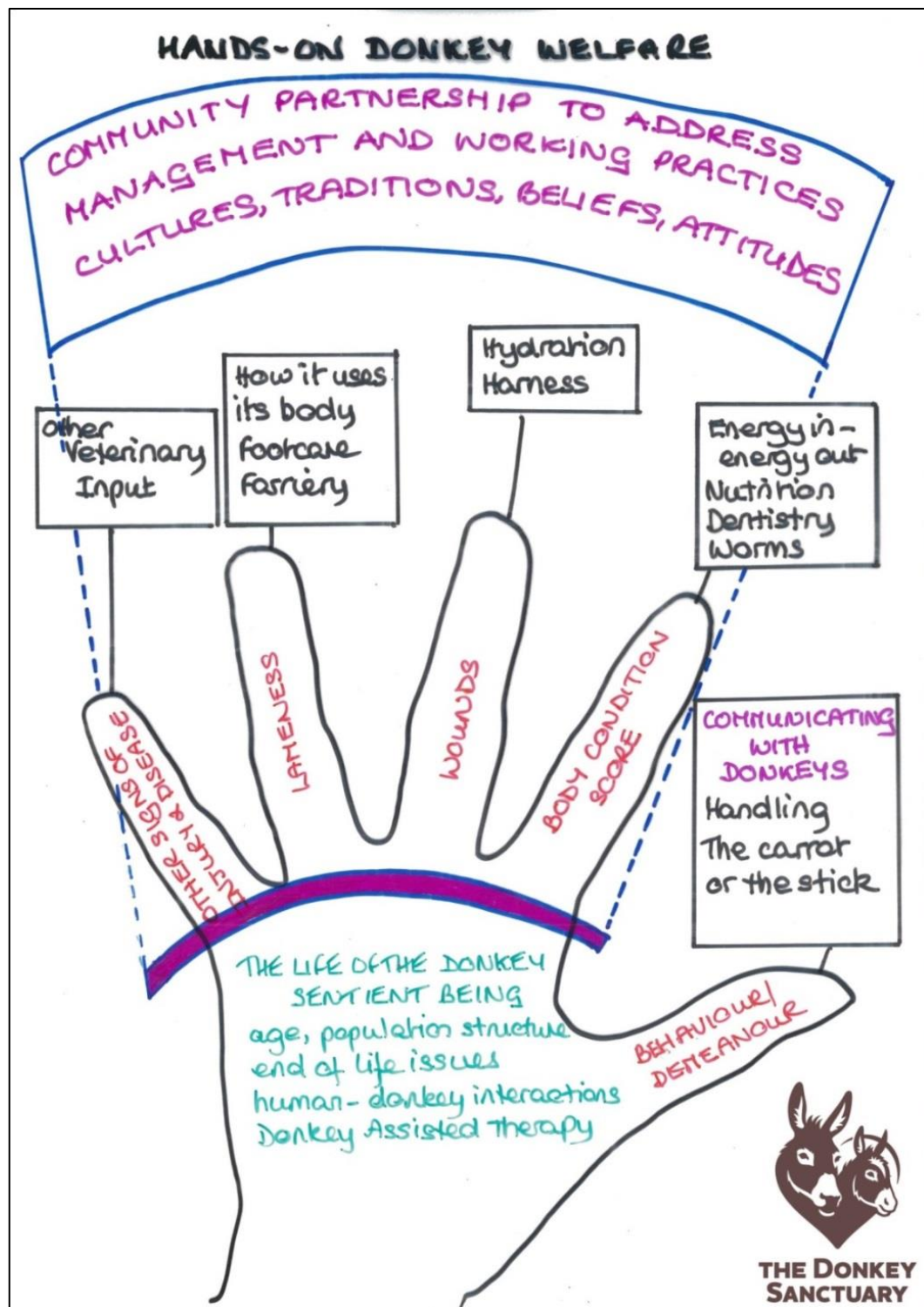


Figure 2.1: The hand assessment: A holistic approach to evaluating welfare and telling the donkey's story without recourse to forms. Unlike Pritchard's assessment protocols the hand has been subjected to limited validation (Galindo et al, 2017).

2.2.2 *Scientific Concepts of Health and Welfare*

Nordenfelt (2006, pp. 10-17) identifies two streams of philosophical thought that frame discussions about health and disease. The first is biostatistical (naturalistic) and reflects a biological conception of health and disease. The second recognises that health and disease are value-laden concepts proposed by theorists and philosophers who take a normative (holistic) view of the subject.

Biostatistical theories of health and disease claim that normal biological functions can be specified and defined statistically within a reference class. These are further defined as those functions necessary for the individual's survival and reproduction (Barnard & Hurst, 1996; Boorse, 1997). Such theories are problematic at several levels for they define normality in terms of biological or evolutionary goals⁴⁴. Natural functions are thus fulfilled and a departure from such a purpose represents a dysfunction. Such concepts are particularly problematic for the mule, given that the mule is an aberration of nature, a hybrid whose chromosomal number renders them sterile and virtually incapable of successful reproduction (Eldridge & Suzuki, 1976; Kay, 2003; Zong & Fan, 1989). A mule's lack of evolutionary purpose illustrates some of the problems associated with equating welfare with evolutionary fitness and the fulfilment of natural functions (Nordenfelt, 2006, pp. 18-23). References to 'necessary functions' and 'vital goals' rely on a non-intentional interpretation of such functions and deny the patient agency.

Other examples of naturalistic theories equate health to productivity. Blood & Studdert (1999) thus define health as a "state of physical and psychological wellbeing and of productivity, including reproduction", whilst Black's Veterinary Dictionary states that "health is now more accurately regarded as a state of maximum economic production" (cited in Nordenfelt, 2006, p. 48). Health is thus reduced to the body's ability to ward off and combat pathology, again reflecting a statistical concept of normality, with the emphasis being placed on the immune system and reparative processes. Such theories similarly deny the patient agency, the opportunity of determining their own goals and the autonomy necessary to define their own conception of health and welfare.

⁴⁴ The design of an organ, or indeed of whole organisms, is related to the causal history that evolutionary theory puts forth.

Holistic theories of health and disease recognise the importance of goals but consider these to be intentional rather than biological. Disease, or disability, impact negatively on one's ability to attain these goals. A strong connection is therefore said to exist between suffering and disability (Nordenfelt, 2006, p. 13).

Focussing on the individual has resulted in feelings being incorporated into theories of welfare despite the obvious problems of knowing what an animal might be experiencing. These constitute the "problem of animal minds" (Nordenfelt, 2006, p. 77). Attempts to access such experiences have led to increasing acknowledgement of the merits and advocacy of critical anthropomorphism. This involves a willingness to draw on our own experiences and feelings, our knowledge of both human and nonhuman animals and the weighing of this with empirical data (Burghardt, 1990; Cousquer, 2013; Dawkins, 1990; Donovan, 2008; Johnston, 2008). According to Karlson (2012), avoiding anthropomorphism, leads us into other morphisms such as mechanomorphism; critical anthropomorphism therefore provides us with a valuable communicative strategy providing it is used critically. Karlsson (2012, p. 708) points out that, while we have vocabulary for equine feet (i.e. hooves) that helps us talk of their difference, we do not have a similar vocabulary for equine happiness. He further points out that a linguistic exaggeration of the difference between people and animals seems to be conjoined with a tendency to exaggerate conformity in people, suggesting that these exaggerations may explain why anthropomorphism rather than egomorphism has been the focus of criticism. One of the hurdles to establishing dialogue about shared experiences is language. Attempts have, nevertheless been made to establish whether an animal is happy or unhappy, fares well or badly.

Attempts to theorise (or scientise) welfare have seen this concept characterised in terms of preference satisfactions, of needs and of the satisfaction of natural behaviour. But how is the satisfaction of wants and desires in the short term to be weighed against longer term happiness? This reflects the vexed problem of determining what the nature of 'the good' is for any one individual. The ontology of needs is equally mysterious (Nordenfelt, 2006, p. 107). The limited set of basic human needs proposed by Maslow (1968)⁴⁵ is contrasted with the similarly hierarchical organisation of animal needs

⁴⁵ Maslow orders his five needs as follows: physiological needs, the need of safety, the need of belongingness or love, the need of esteem and the need to self- actualization.

proposed by Curtis (1987)⁴⁶. Physiological needs are generally well understood within animal production in as much as they impact on productivity. Similarly, safety needs that typically result in injury and death are also generally respected in order to limit losses (Salmona, 1994, p. 99). Behavioural needs are afforded less importance and can be denied through abuse (active cruelty), neglect (passive cruelty) and deprivation (Nordenfelt, 2006, p. 111). Where animals are prevented from behaving naturally, they may demonstrate signs of boredom, frustration and other atypical behaviours (Price, 2008, pp. 272-274; Wemelsfelder, 2005). Abnormal behavioural patterns can be obvious and will usually be detectable through behavioural analysis. My students often ask why mules paw the ground or weave their heads: able to identify this behaviour as abnormal but unable to interpret further⁴⁷.

Nordenfelt concludes her review by introducing a holistic view of animal health and disease, arguing that animals can suffer and express their suffering:

In their wordless way they can ask for help. If the animals in question are in close contact with humans, which is the case with pets and livestock, the humans can interpret the call for help and can try to respond to it. If the humans suspect serious illness, they call for further support and approach a veterinary surgeon, who will act very much like a human doctor in searching for an underlying disease responsible for the illness of the animal. (Nordenfelt, 2006, pp. 151-152)

These represent different readings of the animal's communications. Attentiveness to these signs determines what is registered for interpretation. Subsequent interpretations are then informed by the individual's awareness of what is normal. Where the owner has an awareness of what is normal for their animal, the veterinarian systematically gathers information by way of a history and clinical examination. The veterinarian's awareness of what is 'normal' biologically is then deployed in making a clinical assessment. We thus can talk, in both cases of perception and perceptivity⁴⁸ but also of differing interpretative abilities. What is unclear is the extent to which any such readings represent accurate transcriptions or a 'translation' that sooner or later fails

⁴⁶ Curtis (1987) proposes a simplified version of Maslow's needs starting with physiological needs, safety needs and finishing with behavioural needs.

⁴⁷ As a sign of frustration arising from the denial of a behavioural need when tethered for example.

⁴⁸ Salmona (1994, p. 83) talks of the floating attention ('attention flottante') that can scan or look over a herd without searching for specific indicators of disease and (p. 30) of the knowing look ('le coup d'œil') that the best farmers and stockmen possess.

and is thus betrayed⁴⁹. Wemelsfelder summarises the challenge involved in evaluating quality of life and making qualitative assessments:

... in their primary reliance on human perception/interpretation, judgements of quality are vulnerable to various forms of personal bias and are easily seen as just somebody's personal view. ... [and] ... have, certainly within the animal sciences, traditionally been kept outside the scientific domain. Yet discarding such judgements ... creates tension; we cannot stop ourselves from making qualitative judgements ... yet there are very few, if any, formal channels through which we can apply these in our scientific work. (2007, p. 2)

Wemelsfelder concludes that we can develop greater insight into animal welfare and quality of life when we take the time to closely attend to animals and their expressions. She advocates that we develop approaches that allow us to consider whether animals are contented, sociable, playful or irritable, unsettled, uncomfortable, withdrawn as this allows us to make improvements to animal welfare:

Knowledge of species-specific behavioural repertoires, and extensive experience in observing and interacting with individuals in different contexts, is required to accurately judge the meaning of animal body language. In developing this skill it is particularly important to adopt a 'whole animal' perspective, and always judge observed details of posture and behaviour in light of the entire animal's interaction with its surroundings. Such a perspective requires engagement with the animal's situation, and is essentially built on relationship and empathetic communication. The skill to communicate effectively with the animals in one's company is ancient and does not need scientific validation to prove its worth. (2007, p. 9)

There is thus a tension between scientifically validated qualitative assessments of welfare (Fleming et al, 2013; Minero et al, 2016; Napolitano et al, 2008) and the reality that emerges in the lived encounters of those who live and work with equines and other animals. Scientific formulations seek to present norms that can serve as useful reference points. Clinical assessments are informed by these but also draw on practice, practical experience and artistry. When confronted with traditional knowledge and understandings born of living and working with animals, significant differences become apparent. To explore this further, I now consider how the academic views of clinical or philosophical 'specialists' relate to popular notions of health and welfare.

⁴⁹ Here translation is to be understood both as 'traduction and trahison' (Law, 2009, pp. 144-145). See also Serres (1974). A 'trahison', or betrayal, would occur where the observations and measurements still fail to do justice to the mule's welfare.

2.2.3 *Popular conceptions of health and welfare*

Dockes and Kling-Eveillard (2007) identify four broad types of farmer⁵⁰ according to how they relate to their animals: Those who farm ‘for the animal’, those who farm ‘with the animal’, those who farm ‘despite the animal’ and those who ‘farm for technicity’⁵¹. Whilst these categories may be artificial and overly rigid, they reflect a spectrum of affectivity with, at one extreme, farming conceived as all about the animal, at the other farming conceived as a technical act to be perfected. The first group tend to see animals as individuals. They appreciate shared bonds. Technician farmers are, by contrast, more likely to instrumentalise their animals. This suggests that the status of the animal and the nature of health and welfare are conceived differently depending on the extent to which farmers permit affectivity to colour their ontology. Salmona (1994, p. 26) similarly emphasises the importance of affective mothering tendencies among those who work with animals. These complex dispositions, learnt and refined through practice, involve tolerance of solitude, patience with animals, especially the troublesome ones, great perceptivity, resistance to fatigue, fortitude in the face of adversity and a particular relationship both with one’s own body and one’s work.

Development of this awareness in turn allows changes to be identified. This becomes routine, instinctive and can even be achieved when asleep! According to Salmona (1994, p. 51) «les éleveurs ont le sommeil de la nourrice ... qui se réveillent au moindre bruit ... ils se réveillent lorsque les bruits nouveaux apparaissent dans le paysage sonore ou que l’intensité des bruits habituels produits par les animaux varie»⁵². Students at the CFAMM discussing how close men were to their mule⁵³, explained that the man slept above his mule, while the grandmother slept above the cow. The grandmother thus listens to the cow, the mother to the children and the father to his mule.

⁵⁰ In French the term ‘éleveur’, translated here as ‘farmer’ is synonymous with ‘rearer’ and the act of rearing. As such it implies a more nurturing relationship.

⁵¹ ‘Les éleveurs pour l’animal’, ‘les éleveurs avec l’animal’, ‘les éleveurs malgré l’animal’, ‘les éleveurs pour la technique’ (Dockes & Kling-Eveillard, 2007, p. 24).

⁵² The farmer sleeps like the wet-nurse ... who wakes at the slightest noise ... they too wake on becoming aware of novel sounds appearing within their auditory landscape or when the intensity of habitual animal sounds varies.

⁵³ And why it was claimed that ‘the mule was always in their thoughts’.

Any implicit theory of the body invokes functional representations of what it can do or be used for (Boltanski, 1971, p. 107). Cléau emphasises the relationship between work and the way in which the body is viewed:

Le discours sur le corps affirme un rapport au travail, à l'action, élément primordial qui organise et formalise une partie de l'identité de groupe et de l'identité sexuée, ou le culte de l'effort et de la prise de risque est masculin et le soin féminin.⁵⁴ (2012)

The normal and the pathological, according to Canguilhem (1989), reflect what everyday people take to be so; this relates to the tests they subject their bodies to.

On an individual level, judgements are made about one's health status due to how able or impaired one feels in fulfilling allotted roles, which may mean feeling 'too unwell' to perform tasks as required by both oneself and others. This construction is ultimately relational, not defined solely by an interior reference point locked within the individual, but rather judged in a pragmatic, task based fashion relative to what individuals require of themselves in response to what is, in turn, required of them by others (family, friends, colleagues, employers). (Philo, 2007, p. 85)

Where animals are concerned, the division of labour between men and women further complicates any understanding of health and pathology. Salmona (1994, pp. 124-126) reports that women⁵⁵ have the knowledge, affective and observational skills required to 'diagnose' a problem and the disposition to treat and care for the sick but are disempowered and demoralised by man's appropriation and operationalization of these problems. Decisions are taken from them. Whilst men may have more scientific knowledge they do not see the same animal. False diagnoses are thus made and treatments often delayed. Significant gender differences in the roles undertaken by the pastoralists of the Atlas and the belief systems that inform them are further emphasised by Mahdi (1999). In the case of the muleteers working in the mountain tourism industry, they are all without exception men.

⁵⁴ Discussion of the body affirms its relationship with work and with action. This primordial element in the organisation of the (social) group contributes both to group and individual identity. The cult of effort is masculine, that of caring feminine.

⁵⁵ The men and women spoken of here are considered members of a traditional peasant society.

2.3 *Pack Animal Welfare in Practice*

The pack mule that fares well is conceived differently by all concerned. These realities are evidenced in the practices of the various actors, each a specialist of sorts, each with a different relationship to the mule. We are thus confronted with the question of whether the mule and the mule's welfare are singular realities (Law, 2004, pp. 25-32). Or, could the mule be acted upon to bring about multiple realities? As such, welfare might be the "product or the effect of different sets of inscription devices and practices" (Law, 2004, p. 32). To understand what pack animal welfare *is* (and there are multiple "*is*"s), I turn to the work of Annemarie Mol.

Mol's (2002) ethnography of atherosclerosis emphasises how this disease emerges in different practices. She argues that the disease is *enacted* (deliberately choosing a word without baggage), it is "being done". By focusing on practices, her praxiography charts "a way out of perspectivalism into the disease itself" (p. 12). This, she does, by adding a third step to the two already taken by social scientists (namely, to delineate *illness* as an object of study to be added to a disease's physicalities and to stress that whatever doctors say about a disease is *talk*, something specific to their perspective on that disease) by "foregrounding practicalities, materialities, *events* ... disease becomes part of what is done in practice" (pp. 12-13). By focusing on the practices of patients, doctors, imaging specialists, pathologists (of all those who integrate the disease into their practices), Mol is able to capture the multiplicity of ways a different version of the disease is unveiled (i.e. appears) in different practices. Awareness and knowledge of the condition is thus crafted, it emerges when and where knowing becomes embedded in various activities (p. 89). By embracing more fully what disease "is", by "keeping the practicalities involved in enacting reality present" (p. 54), she starts to see and know it more richly. Arguably, she does not come to know the disease in the way that surgeons who operate on it do, she does not know the disease in an embodied sense, but the ways in which she comes to know it allow her to do other things. She can question the power that getting close and forming "a strong alliance with physical reality grants to doctors" (p. 9). She can question the limited ways in which doctors can know the disease, its manifestations, its nature, its origins. And she can study and question the ways in which "small instances" and "full-blown" (p. 99) instances of controversy between different enactments are negotiated, asking whether closure is "a matter of solving the logical

contradictions between theories or solving the social conflicts between groups promoting theories” (p. 87).

That she can do this is, in part, because many of these practices cannot be undertaken simultaneously⁵⁶ and because (p. 88) “work may go on so long as the different parties do not seek to occupy the same spot” ... “so long as they are separated between sites”. Further on (p. 104), she argues that “tensions between these ways to enact the reality of the disease are articulated but it doesn’t come to a full-blown fight” because the differences are distributed “over specialisms”.

Mol suggest that “the disease to be treated is a composite object” (p. 71), whose “different elements together make a patchwork singularity, the disease-to-be treated of a specific patient” that gives rise to “a judgement about what to do” (p. 72). She argues that the coordination of these composite parts “into singularity doesn’t depend on the possibility to refer to a pre-existing object. It is a task.” What emerges from Mol’s descriptions is that the condition takes shape within the practices of those who encounter it and enact it. These enactments could be described as ‘becomings’, as the realisations of hidden potentialities, that are part of the condition. There are problems, however, with Mol’s characterisation of the body multiple. I want to single out three – her failure to deal with power, dialogue and time – and the ways these contribute to the appearance of multiplicity and the disappearance of unity.

Her claims that pathological and clinical atherosclerosis “*exclude* one another” (p. 35)⁵⁷ hide the way she herself brings this exclusion into being in her own practice as praxiographer and writer. It also hides the choice she makes to observe, to remain neutral, not to interfere, not to explore and try to reconcile these practices. It hides too the lack of power she has to influence these practices. When she quotes a vascular surgeon’s use of the word “we” in “of course we only treat the symptoms”, she does not challenge the surgeon for really meaning “I”, she does not question the lack of community, of team work. Had she sought community and therefore dialogue (Arnett, 1986; Buber, 2000; Kramer, 2004), either in one person or a small team, her results

⁵⁶ She cites, for example, the viewing of a section of an artery under a microscope in the pathology lab and the questioning and examination of the patient whose artery is subsequently examined in the outpatient department (2002, p. 35).

⁵⁷ She later talks of ‘social atherosclerosis’ (p. 70).

would have been very different. Had she found the doctor who was at one patient and diagnostician, she might have brought together two different enactments in one. Had she found a married couple who were general practitioner, imaging specialist, nutritionist and surgeon all-in-one, she might have brought together many different enactments.

If I raise these objections, it is not to criticise Mol's work but to contrast it with the approach taken by Otto Scharmer's team when working to establish generative dialogue in the patient-physician dialogue forum (Kaeufer, Scharmer and Versteegen, 2003; Scharmer, 2009) that transformed the health care system in the Lahn Dill region, north of Frankfurt.

Dialogue is rare, increasingly so in individualistic societies (Arnett, 1986). Mol's use of the word 'coordination' to describe how different versions of a disease are negotiated reflects the ways these versions associate rather than commune. I argue that practices create division and that multiplicity therefore arises in practice, it does not necessarily pre-exist those practices. I further argue, drawing on the timeless example of the expedition (MacIntyre, 2007) as exemplified by the first Ascent of Everest (Cousquer, 2009; Cousquer and Allison, 2012; Hunt, 1953a; 1953b) that where common goals are identified collectively, actions can align with intentions.

Whilst many aspects of Mol's work help us understand how realities are enacted in practice, whilst they help us attend better to the way(s) in which something – whether it be a disease, or in the case of this study, mule welfare, – becomes a reality, I find its focus on describing existing practice limits its usefulness. There is no imagination, no time travel, no emergent future. And that is acceptable given that Mol has chosen to undertake a praxiography and has, furthermore, chosen (p. 155) not to make “the quality of handling disease/illness and the rest of the world in hospital practice... the explicit concern” of her study. Mol's own, practice, her work and words have, however, contributed to the cocreation of multiplicity and therefore disunity. By emphasising that “atherosclerosis is enacted as a present condition there, as a process that has a history” (p. 104), alternative futures are not actualised. Instead, Mol states that internists who worry that surgeons intervene on encroached vessels whilst neglecting the process of encroachment are not in the position to raise a controversy. The

controversy is already there. What is missing is dialogue and community and the practices of co-seeing, co-sensing, co-presencing and co-creating that allow communities to cohere. What then are the implications of this chapter's review for mule welfare practices?

Firstly, the quality of handling welfare/poor welfare is the explicit concern of this study. Praxiography is not therefore an option. Whilst the practices of those enacting welfare are my focus, this thesis sets out to transform those practices by means of co-seeing and co-sensing journeys that deliver greater awareness of welfare and of how it is co-produced.

Secondly, Mol's call to attend to the *good* rather than to truth (pp. 165-166) is embraced for, in focussing on practices and how they are negotiated, this study recognises that practices are moral journeys that we must attend to if we are to chart virtuous courses towards possible future goodnesses.

I end this section on animal welfare in practice by returning to the actors prominent within mountain tourism, who enact complex and emergent realities: of mule, of welfare and of health. These are here viewed as 'slippery' realities, shifting across time and space. These emergent realities are embedded in the different practices whose trajectories are brought together on treks and expeditions and are inscribed by a range of inscription devices. These are visible in the mule (as wounds, trauma, fear and pain for example...) but the power to translate them into words is distributed unevenly. We must therefore be wary of words for as Rohr (2013, p. 12) says: "words by themselves will invariably divide the moment", whereas "pure presence lets it be, what it is, as it is." The challenge then is to be present to that which is written on the mule's face and skin and in her eyes, in her behaviour, body carriage and language. Mules enact their own welfare and have something to say about the imposition of other enactments of welfare if only we could read them.

Price (2008, p. 6), for example, urges caution when naming behavioural acts "since personal biases and assumptions can influence the choice of names". He suggests that behaviour can be described at three levels of complexity (the motor or action-pattern level, the functional level and the emotional level that describes mental states) and that the danger of misinterpretation increases with the level of complexity. More recently,

however, qualitative behaviour assessment has been shown to be an appropriate methodology for the study of horse behavioural responsiveness, in that it provided a multifaceted characterisation of the emotional state of horses (Fleming et al, 2013; Napolitano et al, 2008), donkeys (Minero et al, 2016) and other animals. Helpful, yes. Helpful in the sense that they contribute to our listening to others, to the co-sensing journeys we undertake with mules.

Mol's focus on practice (her focus on a *politics of what* rather than a *politics of who*) allows her to claim (2002, p. 176) that "different enactments of a disease entail different ontologies ... that each come with different ways of doing the good" and that "Different too are the ideals that, standing in for the unreachable "health", orient treatment. This is a crucial point for it is these ideals (or "highest future possibilities") that, whilst indeterminate represent the journey's ultimate destination. Journeys are, however, different, there is no one path and, faced with uncertainty, man has always sought a guide, a guidebook or a map to help navigate by. Substituting "mule welfare" for "human health", we are left asking where to look for these ideals. One source of guidelines that has emerged during the time I have been working on this issue is the recently published welfare guidelines for working animals produced by ABTA. The list of consultant contributors to these guidelines (2012, pp. 52-53) reads like a Who's Who of eminent experts. The absence of poor illiterate animal owners is striking, however, and one is reminded of Michael Callon's probing of writing and rewriting devices (2006, pp. 205-215) in which he asks of a company manual "Who can write all this?" "Who is the author?" He concludes the constant rewriting of the manual takes into account the thoughts and experiences of employees and customers, allowing the manual to serve as a constant reference point. Returning to the ABTA guidelines, one is left wondering to what extent the mule and the mule owner contribute and who the authors actually speak for. Who reads such welfare codes, especially given the illiteracy of many owners, and how are such codes then enacted?

These are important questions for as Putnam and Putnam (1993, p. 363) point out "members of a privileged ruling class cannot be expected to see the world in the way it is perceived by those having to struggle for their bare existence". What meaning is to be found in such norms if persons with widely divergent ideas of the good are not afforded the opportunity to examine where these overlap. This "involves more than simply

sharing a language, it involves willingness to share where the other person comes from” (p. 374). In doing so, there is a need to explore what concepts such as ‘welfare’ and ‘health’ might mean in very different situations rather than prescribing from afar. This is essential if we are to avoid what Salmona (1994, p. 21) describes as scientific and technical terrorism that aid workers, decision makers and agronomists inflict on peasant societies.⁵⁸

The ABTA guidelines provide a definition of animal welfare based around the ‘Five Freedoms’, developed by the Farm Animal Welfare Council:

Animal welfare refers to the state of an animal. An animal is in a reasonable state of welfare if it is healthy, comfortable, well-nourished, safe, able to express innate behaviour and if it is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear and distress. (ABTA, 2012, p. 2)

The terms ‘reasonable’, ‘welfare’, ‘healthy’, ‘comfortable’ are presented as unproblematic and yet are very much disputed (Canguilhem, 2002; Nordenfelt, 2006). Health and wellbeing are, after all, embodied experiences that, far from uniquely physiological are eminently sociocultural (Cléau, 2012). A praxiography of muling, of muleteering, of trekking, of trek selling is therefore needed in order to examine the ‘black box’ (Latour & Woolgar, 2006, p. 242) that has generated these guidelines and the personal guidelines of those enacting their version of welfare.

⁵⁸ «Je retrouverais en France ce même terrorisme scientifique et technique de la part des agronomes, des décideurs et des vulgarisateurs. Ces questions de ‘l’oubli’ par l’appareil d’État des grandes cultures paysannes en France et de la violence liée aux politiques de vulgarisation et d’incitation économique recouvrant dans leur apparente banalité une interrogation sur les formes de violence de l’appareil d’État d’une société démocratique.» (Salmona, 1994, p. 21)

2.4 *Summary*

This chapter has reviewed different ways of knowing the mule, distinguishing between the knowledge we possess about (and that allows us to dominate) the mule and knowing, born of dialogue. The relationship between man and mule and specifically the quality of communication at the heart of that relationship, can be enacted differently depending on who we are, our intentions and how we attend to the other. Clinical, scientific and popular ways of knowing how a mule fares were then considered before exploring the multiple welfares that emerge in practice. This thesis draws on these ideas in exploring how welfare is enacted in mountain tourism. The empirical chapters focus specifically on how relationships are enacted by the traditional bit, dialogue, muleteers and agencies, thereby raising awareness of these multiple realities and how they are created by the system and can be re-negotiated through dialogical encounters. Martin Buber's work on genuine dialogue and Otto Scharmer's pioneering work on delivering awareness and change through Action Research will be covered in greater depth in the Methodology Chapter, after I have dealt with the empirical context(s) in which this work is grounded.

EMPIRICAL CONTEXT

The Pack Mule of the High Atlas and Moroccan Mountain Tourism

Si le dromadaire est le vaisseau du désert, il est, lui le vaisseau des montagnes

Adolphe Guénon⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Guénon (1899, p.29)

3.1 *The Pack Mule of the High Atlas*

The mule is widely used across the developing world as a means of transport and source of power (Chauhan, 2005; Cousquer & Allison, 2012; Fuller and Aye, 2012; Pritchard et al, 2005). Mules are particularly favoured in the mountains (Barman, 2000), where they have earned themselves a formidable reputation, prompting Guénon (1899) to propose that, if the camel is the ship of the desert, the mule is the ship of the mountains⁶⁰. Cunninghame-Graham (1898, pp. 169-170) reported that mules in Morocco fetched more money than the best horses, explaining that in “districts like the Atlas, mules are more serviceable than any horse and on mountain roads will perform a third longer journey in a day.” Today, in the High Atlas, the mule still provides valuable service wherever the incursion of roads and pistes has yet to transform transportation. In many areas of the High Atlas, mules are employed to plough the fields, thresh the corn, carry fodder and, on market day, ensure the transport of his master and all goods to and from the souk (Figures 3.1a-3.1d). The mule also carries building supplies (Figures 3.2a-3.2b), gas bottles and other less traditional household items, such as beds, sofas and even fridges! During the trekking season (Figures 3.3a-3.3b), the mule will also find employment carrying the luggage of trekkers and other visiting tourists.

Mules have played their own part in establishing themselves as essential travel companions, demonstrating unrivalled work capacities and the resilience to endure great hardship. These unusual attributes have long been recognised:

Those who are staunch supporters of the mule say that, in comparison with the horse he will live longer, endure more work and hardship, require less attention and feed, is less liable to digestive disorders, lameness and disease, is more easily handled in large numbers, is less irritable, and is more capable of performing work in the hands of a mediocre or poor horseman. Whether or not all these claims may be substantiated, it is a fact that the mule is well established as a work animal in those sections where climatic conditions are severe, suitable feed often lacking and horsemanship not a prevailing art. (Williams and Speelman, 1948, p. 2)

Whilst mules, horses and camels figure prominently in the writings of early travellers to Morocco (Buffa, 1810; Cunninghame Graham, 1898; Harris, 1921; 1895; 1889; Lewis,

⁶⁰ «Si le dromadaire est le vaisseau du désert, il est, lui le vaisseau des montagnes» (Guénon, 1899, p. 29). For further discussion of the nature of mules see Cousquer & Allison (2012, p. 1845).

2013; Loti, 1890; Stuttfield, 1886)⁶¹, the mule, it turns out, is a relatively new arrival to the High Atlas, something that only emerged during my research through interviews undertaken with village elders⁶². This was subsequently corroborated by the discovery of an account of an exploratory journey undertaken around the Toubkal in 1917 by a French party. Paul Penet (1919, p. 8) describes their crossing of the 3460m Tizi n Tarharat, emphasising the distance that local people had to travel to market and the arduous and perilous nature of the journey:

We climbed bit by bit. Everyone had dismounted with the exception of Si Abd en Nebi, ... He is all pale; mountain sickness complicated by palpitations make walking impossible for him.

At 3,100m we stop. Man and beast have need of rest ... To the side of the path we see a number of shelters – crudely built of stone. It is there that travellers take shelter if waylaid by a terrible snow storm or by nightfall. They also provide shelter for livestock as the people of the *Tifnout* valley readily send their cattle over the Tizi n Tarharat, on their way to market in Marrakech.

Two men on foot join our group: bare headed, in rags, the one wearing goat skin slippers, the other sandals made of walnut wood; they are heading back to their home valley of the Upper Tifnout after an absence of six days. They had been to buy maize in Moulay Brahim – three day’s walk away – and were carrying it back on their backs.

Penet concludes: “These people are astonishing.” At close of day he writes (p. 13): “Si Abd en Nebi’s horse lay down in an enclosure ... Colicing and suffering from laminitis, he was in a bad way. His rider appeared unconcerned and disinterested. We therefore had to insist that he rubbed him down, covered him and tended to him.”. Sadly, the horse perished the next morning. The following day, Penet writes:

Aguezrane, where we were to camp that night, is no further than 8kms away as the crow flies. But, the awful path we were obliged to take – sometimes clinging to the granite sides of the valley, sometimes twisting in the debris of the river bed, sometimes mixed up with the river itself – took us three long hours. To describe this path as serving the villages that succeed each other as one descends the valley would be more than a euphemism, it would be a gross exaggeration! ... One can see that these mountain peoples are in the habit of travelling on foot. Owning a mule, even more a horse, is a luxury that only the chiefs can permit themselves.

⁶¹ According to Lammiri (n.d., p. 1), these accounts “contributed to remove the veil which screened mutual knowledge and understanding between Morocco and the UK.”

⁶² Cunninghame Graham (1898, p. 89) states that the Berber “only become horsemen by necessity as when the Arabs have forced them to the desert”.

This account is striking for several reasons. Firstly, it highlights the isolation and poverty of the local population and the fact that they could neither afford to buy let alone keep and care for horses and mules. This only started to change in the Mizane valley as the local economy evolved away from its agrarian background with the emergence of arboriculture and tourism in the 1980s (Funnell and Parish, 1999). Secondly, it highlights the perception of visiting tourists that the Moroccan had little concern for equine welfare. This is echoed by a consumptive George Orwell, who, convalescing in Marrakech during the winter of 1939, wrote:

I had not been five minutes on Moroccan soil before I noticed the overloading of the donkeys and was infuriated by it. There is no question that the donkeys are damnably treated. The Moroccan donkey is hardly bigger than a St Bernard dog, it carries a load which in the British army would be considered too much for a fifteen-hands mule, and very often its pack-saddle is not taken off its back for weeks together. But what is peculiarly pitiful is that it is the most willing creature on earth, it follows its master like a dog and does not need either bridle or halter. After a dozen years of devoted work it suddenly drops dead, whereupon its master tips it into the ditch and the village dogs have torn its guts out before it is cold. (1970, p. 186)⁶³

The lack of roads, paths and transport infrastructure that characterised the Atlas was true of much of Morocco until the arrival of road and railway engineers during the time of the French protectorate. Gavin Maxwell draws on Walter Harris's account of the Sultan's harka, capturing the importance of horse, mule and camel and the lack of roads:

There are no roads, and the procession of men and animals spreads widely out over the plains and undulating hills. Often as far as the eye can reach one can trace the great migration stretching from horizon to horizon, a rainbow of colour upon the green plains. Sometimes to cross a valley the procession narrows in, to spread out again in the open country beyond, till the whole land is dotted with horsemen and mules and slow-gaited lumbering camels. (1966, pp. 37)

That infrastructure and the establishment of an international airport in Marrakech, in particular, has allowed increasing numbers of tourists and trekkers to discover the Atlas (Boujrouf et al, 1998; Boujrouf, 2001; Hillali, 2009). These incursions of people, cultures, ideas, practices, professions, resources, markets, values and other travelling goods reach deep into traditional rural places, creating dissonance, disruption, change

⁶³ It should be noted that this example is given by Orwell by way of contrast to the invisibility of the local people (p. 184): "One could probably live here for years without noticing that for nine-tenths of the people the reality of life is an endless, back-breaking struggle to wring a little food out of an eroded soil." and as a way of exploring the "culture of blindness ... the very structures of seeing and not seeing and their consequences" (March, 1999, p. 163).

and resistance to change (Bourdeau et al, 2002; Godde, Price and Zimmerman, 2000). Travellers and the travel industry strike deep into the heart of rural places where the mule continues to be worked and cared for in ways that have long since disappeared from much of the developed world. It is hardly surprising that tensions then emerge between different ways of enacting mule welfare.

Travellers who see and disapprove of the care that Moroccans took of mules, horses and other animals have a role to play in helping to deliver improvements in equine welfare:

... the rising tide of tourists to cities such as Marrakech and Meknes have stimulated local authorities and horse carriage drivers to welcome the development of licensing schemes. All calèche horses are now microchipped and have to pass the regular inspections organised at the SPANA centre. In the Atlas mountains, a similar awareness of the need to encourage the use of well cared-for trekking animals has resulted in a successful partnership between SPANA and the local mule owners' association. (Crane, 2009, p. 20)

The pack mule of the High Atlas is thus seen by visitor and local alike; this seeing, however, raises tensions for it is multiple, heterogenous and often blind: The visiting western trekker hails from a part of the world in which horses are kept as companion or sporting animals and working equines rarely seen. Good horsemanship, informed by modern ideas about training (Smith, 2011) and animal welfare, are prevalent and the availability of specialist services from veterinary professionals and farriers taken for granted. It is therefore hardly surprising that the welfare of working pack mules should prove to be a concern amongst tourists who cannot begin to fully understand the practices developed by the Berbers to allow them to work their mules. The difficulty, however, lies in overcoming the partial seeing, the blindness, the fallibility of our own vision (March, 1999).

The delivery of such understanding, an 'all-concerned' account of what it might mean for the mule to fare, live and be well calls for "an ethnographic interest in knowledge practices" (Moll, 2002, p. 5), that is to say an ethnography⁶⁴ of the enactments of mule 'welfare' and 'wellbeing'. This requires us to explore different ways of knowing the mule and of caring for them. The next chapter will therefore present the methods of inquiry that allowed this awareness to be studied and developed.

⁶⁴ Or 'praxiography' (Mol, 2002).

Before leaving the mule and turning to the Moroccan mountain tourism industry, I will take one last leaf out of Mol's work. In her fieldwork, all the doctors studied were male and she therefore allows herself to "use the generic "he" whenever" writing "about the doctor" (2002, p. 2). In my fieldwork, almost all mules are female and all the muleteers are male. The mule would like it to be recognised that their masters are men and that this needs to be emphasised as it makes for a gendered relationship; they also want to emphasise that there are only two male mules in the valley and they do not behave very well around "us girl-mules". For the purposes of this thesis, mules will be referred to as 'she' and muleteers as 'he'.



Figure 3.1a.



Figure 3.1b.



Figure 3.1c.



Figure 3.1d.

Traditional life in the High Atlas sees the mule working in agriculture: ploughing (3.1a), threshing (3.1b), transporting fodder (3.1c) and people (3.1d). The muleteer pictured with his two sons (3.1d) is a long-standing friend, with whom I have been working since 2008. Three images are from the Aït Bouguemmez valley, the fourth (3.1c) was taken above the village of Magdaz, in the Tessaout valley and illustrates the daily need for fodder to be cut and brought back to feed the animals housed within the village.⁶⁵

⁶⁵All images are my own and were taken during what is now nearly a decade of work in Morocco (2008-2017).



Figure 3.2a.



Figure 3.2b.

Working in construction: In the Ourika valley, motorised transport and roads are present and can be used to transport building materials. Even here the mule is still required to deliver materials directly to the building site, which may be some distance from the track. These materials may now consist of bricks and blocks, rather than the more traditional earth and stone, but the mule's versatility and utility ensure that the local populations remain as reliant as ever on this 'work horse'.



Figure 3.3a



Figure 3.3b.

Mules in mountain tourism: Mohamed is an experienced muleteer who, together with his mule, has worked every year for the CFAMM during the five years I instructed there. Mohamed's old leg injury means he cannot flex his right knee. He nevertheless and despite his age, is still able to load his mule (3.3a). They know and understand each other well and appear to have a close relationship. The three muleteers pictured in the Tessaout valley, in 2008, have chosen to ride their mules along the riverbed and have offered a ride to a tired client on the spare mule (3.3b). Independent of spirit and travelling apart from the guide and trekkers it is they that enact (or fail to enact) welfare.

3.2 Moroccan Mountain Tourism

Whilst mountain travel has existed for millennia (Bernier, 2007; Debarbieux, 2002), with mules playing a significant role during that time (Cousquer and Allison, 2012), the history of human fascination with mountains and the emergence of mountain tourism are more recent (Cousquer, 2016; Debarbieux, 2008; 2001; Debarbieux and Rudaz, 2010; Macfarlane, 2003). In Morocco, the mountainous interior fascinated many early explorers, including Buffa (1810), Cuninghame-Graham (1898), de Foucauld (1888)⁶⁶. Tourism, however, is dependent on safety, with early travellers being provided with armed escorts or guides to ensure safe passage (Cuninghame Graham, 1898; Penet, 1919). According to Boujrout et al (1998, p. 69), tourists only arrived in the massif after its pacification. The High Atlas has long been a mountain fortress, serving as sanctuary and refuge to those who lived there (Bernbaum, 2001, p. 141) and resisting the incursions of both alpinists and occupying forces. Unsurprisingly, it was one of the last parts of Morocco to be mapped, with some areas remaining blank until the 1930s. As recently as 1917, five years after the creation of the French protectorate, only those areas in which topographers could venture as part of a military column had been surveyed, leading the topographer Théophylle-Jean Delaye to describe these as completely unknown and closed to Europeans (1932, pp. 3-4)⁶⁷.

According to Bruston et al (1998, p. 73), the Atlas was, during the 1920-30s appropriated by alpinists-cum-scientists. Their various efforts paved the way to the creation, in 1942, of Morocco's first National Park, the Toubkal National Park (Engel et al, 2009; Ramou, 2004) and the emergence of mountain tourism from the 1920s onwards (Bellaoui, 1986, pp. 224-225). The history of mountaineering and mountain tourism in the High Atlas can be traced back to the pioneering activities of a small group of alpinists. In 1922, the Moroccan High Atlas section of the French Alpine Club (CAF) was founded. This led, the following year, to the first ascent of the Djebel Toubkal, North Africa's highest summit, at 4167m (Dresch & Lépiney, 1938).

⁶⁶ See Rachik (2012) for an exquisite review of the different ways in which travellers have come to know Morocco.

⁶⁷ Delaye was put in charge of the aerial photography section of the '*Service géographique du Maroc*' in 1926. His pioneering work, first in the Rif (1925-26) and subsequently in the regions of Ouarzazate and the Drâa valley (1932) and then the Sagho (1935), allowed the occupying forces to pacify the mountain tribes (Delaye, 1934; Duserre, 2009). In 1937, he produced a map of the Toubkal massif at a scale of 1:20,000 (Duserre, 2009).

Following Moroccan independence, in 1956, the mountainous areas of the country continued to be viewed as archaic and useless⁶⁸. The modern State's priority was to develop the most profitable parts of Morocco together with the heavily populated urbanised areas; the mountains were therefore neglected (Bernbaum, 2001, pp. 142-143; Boujrout, 1996, p. 34). The Atlas thus continued to be viewed as part of 'le Maroc inutile', largely forgotten by politicians and little studied by researchers (Bellaoui, 1986, pp. 225-227).

Several explorers strove hard to explore, chart and popularise the High Atlas. Most notable amongst them were the resident Frenchmen André Fougerolles and Michel Peyron who, together with Hamish Brown, have been responsible for producing many articles and guidebooks (Brown, 1966; 1997; 2002; 2006; 2012; Fougerolles, 1982; 1991; Peyron, 1990a; 1990b). These three have, arguably, done more than any other contemporary explorer to popularise these areas, each devoting much of their lives to the Atlas.

In 1985, the *Projet du Haut Atlas Central* (PHAC), a collaborative Franco-Moroccan development programme was launched in the Central High Atlas. This arguably was the springboard on which the Moroccan mountain tourism industry was launched, leading to the creation of a training school, a long-distance, high-level trekking route that came to be known as the *Grande Traversée de l'Haut Atlas* (GTHA), together with the necessary '*gîtes d'étapes*' to accommodate trekkers (Boumaza, 1996; Moudoud, 2000; 2003). Tourism has thus developed as an important source of revenue within mountain communities, offering an alternative to the livestock, arable production and migration economies that historically were the mainstay of the economy (Berque, 1978; Bellaoui, 1996; Funnell and Parish, 1999).

Recent efforts to develop, modernise and professionalise the mountain tourism industry in Morocco are fraught with difficulties, struggling on the one hand to raise standards, whilst failing on the other to deliver any benefits to those mountain areas and inhabitants most in need of development and assistance. Revenue generating mass

⁶⁸ «Le Maroc inutile» is the description popularised by Général Lyautey at the time of the Protectorate (Bennafla and Emperador, 2010).

tourism⁶⁹ has thus been promoted with rural development priorities fading into the background. The reality remains that mountain people need to work and many will continue to do so as clandestine '*faux guides*', some bad, others eminently competent, with an intimate knowledge of their mountain home (Brown, 2005, p. 28). That they do so is illegal, but they have no alternative given the small number of training places available and the need to have one's *baccalauréat*⁷⁰.

The industry is full of inequalities and injustices (Ramou, 2007): The sale of all-inclusive mountain treks by foreign or Marrakech-based agencies⁷¹ ensures little hard currency is spent within mountain communities and the little that is benefits a small number of guides and gîte owners (Boumaza, 1996, pp. 28-29). Those families able to access the capital required to complete their education and build a guest house are usually those with links to the outside world (Berriane, 1993). Ramou (2007, p. 108) highlights this problem and characterises as unsustainable the fact that only a small minority of locals benefit from the mountain tourism industry. This problem reflects the ease with which remote mountain communities are exploited and marginalised (Lynch & Maggio, 2000), decisions made remotely, often with little or no consultation:

... national governments bestow legal favors on outside business and political interests that covet mountain resources, such as water and minerals, but have little or no interest in the well-being of mountain peoples and ecosystems. (Lynch & Maggio, 2000, p. 12)

⁶⁹ Figures on the number of mountain tourists visiting Morocco each year are somewhat scarce and imprecise. Moudoud (2003, p. 2) reports a number of between 60,000 and 120,000 for 2001, depending on the source used.

⁷⁰ When the CFAMM first recruited people from Imlil to be trained as mountain guides, there were no schools in these remote villages and the people concerned were largely illiterate. Primary school education only made its appearance in these valleys during the 1990s. After six years of primary school education (from 6-12 years), Moroccan children are legally required to undertake a further three years of schooling, finishing at age 15. A further three years of study leads to the Baccalauréat for those who choose or are allowed to stay in school. (Chafiqi and Alagui, 2011, p. 32). Sadly, only 46% of those registered in the first year of primary school are still there at age 15, only 23% reach the final year of high school and 13% achieve their Baccalauréat, after which they have the opportunity to pursue university studies (Bougroum and Ibourk, 2011, p. 118).

⁷¹ «Organisé par la ville, ce type de tourisme profite essentiellement à la ville.» (Bellaoui, 1986, p. 225).

The exploitation of those on the bottom rung of the ladder has long been recognised as a problem in Morocco, with Fougerolles (1985) commenting:

Totalement contrôlé par les organisateurs de voyages, ce genre de tourisme ne bénéficie que trop peu à ces hauts pays qui ne reçoivent de ce qui pourrait être un pactole intéressant qui les mobiliserait peut-être, qu'à peine quelques bribes par des locations au rabais de leurs mulets disponibles et par l'achat de quelques moutons destinés aux méchouis qui clôturent généralement ces treks estivaux si bien programmés.⁷²

Bellaoui (1986, pp. 226-227) suggests the elite who profit from mountain tourism will generally consist of families who have engaged with capitalism and moved away from subsistent agriculture, either by becoming large, influential landowners or agriculturalists, by entering commerce or by sending family members abroad or to the cities to work. Those poor families 'sans migrants'⁷³ that are left behind are forced to continue living off the land, unable to produce anything in sufficient quantity to buy the things that the other world has to offer. These people are, in Arabic, '*el aama*', the little people. There are thus two Moroccos: that represented by the Mercedes that flashes past at speed, that by the 'little man' on his donkey, otherwise known as '*le taxi berbère*'.

Mountain tourism engages with both these Moroccos and can find in the second great charm and generosity. Hamish Brown evokes this wonderfully:

The people are honest and friendly, though like any highlanders 'they're no' daft' and will certainly spoil the tourist. Yet on seeing their poverty, the climber, however hard up he may be, feels he is unjustly wealthy. You can travel with the cattle, literally, from Tangier to Marrakech for thirty shillings. Tacheddirt has been described as 'a dump'; but there is no shame in poverty, especially when it is generously shared by the have-nots. (1966, p.43)

The support provided by the pack mule is recognised as one of the great things about mountaineering and trekking in the Atlas (Galley, 2012, p. 26) with Hamish Brown (2005, p. 26) declaring: "baggage mules make trekking an unencumbered joy". Both the mule and the muleteer are, however, easily exploited, especially given the power imbalance and the lack of muleteer organisations and other bodies willing and able to

⁷² Totally under the control of tour organisers this kind of tourism is of too little benefit to the mountain people. Far from being offered a source of riches, that might sufficiently motivate them, they are barely offered a few scraps for the already discounted hire of their mules and the eventual purchase of a sheep destined to be eaten at the end of the trek.

⁷³ Without migrants (Bellaoui, 1986, p. 227).

defend their interests (Cousquer & Allison, 2012). Whilst this exploitation is becoming increasingly visible and is now recognised as part of the responsible tourism (Goodwin, 2011), sustainable and fair-trade tourism agendas (Cole and Morgan, 2010), there has, until now, been no research work undertaken to raise awareness and develop the capability and responsibility of the industry. These aspects of responsible mountain tourism will be revisited in the introduction to the Materials and Methods.

METHODS OF INQUIRY

Attending to the Mule: An Action Methodology

The contemplative response to the moment is always appreciation and inherent re-spect (to look at a second time) because I am now part of what I am trying to see. Our first practical and partial observation of most things lacks this respect. It is not yet contemplative knowing.

Richard Rohr⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Rohr (2016, p. 51)

4.1 Introduction

Knowing the mule, concerning ourselves with how she fares invites us to take responsibility for her welfare. Responsible tourism is predicated upon awareness raising (Goodwin, 2011, p. 33). But what exactly is awareness raising: how and when do we come to know, to care and to take responsibility? Who should develop their awareness? What should they be aware of and to what extent should that awareness be developed? When provided with opportunities to suspend judgements, redirect attention and attend to others, awareness is transformed but what do they then do with this awareness? How can awareness grow and spread across a community of practitioners? Answering these questions is of vital importance if those practising tourism are to take responsibility and develop their response-ability, their capacity to respond. Where mule welfare is concerned, there is an urgent need to understand how the practices that bind mule and man together can be improved and rendered more equitable.⁷⁵ This calls for a methodology for action both with and for the mule.

A staged model of Action Research (AR) is presented that moves from an understanding of the issue(s) to the transformation of working practices with new insights emerging ‘organically’ (Bisplinghoff, 1998) as part of an ongoing inquiry into how mule welfare can be better practised. The relationship and communication between man and mule was targeted and an inquiring approach adopted that allowed practitioners to develop their ability to act “awarely and choicefully” and to “assess effects in the outside world while acting” (Reason and Torbert, 2001). This involved undertaking journeys to explore how abandoning the traditional bit and substituting a head collar in its place could transform both man and mule.

My focus on the quality of attention, dialogue and communion needed to promote awareness and action, led me to use a form of AR developed by Otto Scharmer and his colleagues at MIT. This increasingly popular⁷⁶ approach to action inquiry is known as Theory U and was used in this study to develop and explore awareness of mule welfare and to presence, understand and transform the way the industry takes responsibility for

⁷⁵ If dialogue between the stakeholders is achieved, it is possible to move beyond restructuring and redesigning (new structures, practices and processes) to reframing (new thinking and principles) and even regenerating (new purpose). See Scharmer (2009, pp. 27-30).

⁷⁶ Promoted by the Presencing Institute, hubs and coaching circles have been established across the World. For further information visit www.Presencing.org

mule welfare. To understand how this approach can transform awareness, the concept of awareness is revisited, placing emphasis on deepening levels of awareness and how these levels of knowing can be accessed. The broadening of awareness is then considered to better understand how this new awareness enters, interacts with, disrupts and, in turn, transforms the practices and context(s) of the lived world(s) that the mule is subject to.

The concept of the 'journey' as a microcosm of change and the application of an action inquiry approach as part of the journeys undertaken with mules, muleteers and the wider mountain tourism industry are then presented. The need for a guide on these journeys led me to reflect critically on my own practice as a leader and mentor on such journeys⁷⁷, a role similar to the 'entrepreneur of the spirit' or 'dream whisperer' who seeks to ignite the human imagination and awaken hope:

They connect meaning to action. They craft narratives that release human energy. They make new maps that guide us into places where there are no paths. As importantly, they help us to discover the courage that it takes to journey towards our humanity. (McManus, 2014, p. 158)

This inquiry is thus an attempt to better understand and map what these journeys towards our humanity⁷⁸ might look like. It seeks to hold open the space necessary for a generative dialogue to take shape in which all participants, including the mule, can explore and negotiate what they truly want for the future.

The methodological section concludes with an account of my positionality, practice and reflexivity as an action researcher. This is then followed by an account of the data collection and analysis methods used. This work threw up several challenging ethical issues and these are considered in the last section of this chapter.

⁷⁷ My awareness of the crucial importance of my role as a guide emerged as I came to see the need to facilitate the industry as it sought its own solutions rather than seeking solutions for the industry to adopt. This is not to say that the solutions I proposed were unhelpful; they certainly helped but they did not necessarily address the deeper issues that are located at the level of one's assumptions and beliefs.

⁷⁸ What Scharmer describes as 'our highest future possibility'.

4.2 *Methodology for Action*

4.2.1 *Action Inquiry*

According to Reason and Bradbury (2008, p. 1), AR is “not so much a methodology as an orientation to inquiry in which qualities of engagement, curiosity and question posing are brought to bear on significant practical issues”. It brings together a range of “practices of living inquiry”, “engaging those who might otherwise be subjects of research” in “more or less systematic cycles of action and reflection”. These cycles integrate knowing and action, “responding to a desire to act creatively in the face of practical and often pressing issues” (p. 3), opening new “communicative spaces in which dialogue and development can flourish” (p. 3). It “draws on many ways of knowing” and is “values oriented, seeking to address issues of significance concerning the flourishing of human persons, their communities and the wider ecology in which we participate” (p. 4). Perhaps most importantly (p. 4), it is a “living, emergent process that cannot be predetermined but changes and develops as those engaged deepen their understanding of the issues to be addressed and develop their capacity as co-inquirers.”

4.2.2 *Mules as Members of a Community of Inquiry*

Debra Merskin’s seminal paper on the promise of participatory action research for animals argues cogently that “working toward a level of mutuality with other-than-human-animals benefits us all (2011, p. 150) and that our ideas of research, communication and community must be revised. I have argued elsewhere that the mule is a member of the trekking team (Cousquer and Allison, 2012). The mule is therefore a community member, a being with whom we communicate and negotiate; a participatory intelligence whose ability to co-sense, co-author and co-create the World we live in is only now being recognised.

Our world does not consist of separate things but of relationships that we co-author. ... A participatory worldview places human persons and communities as part of their world – both human and more-than-human – embodied in their world, co-creating their world. (Reason and Bradbury, 2006, p. 7)

I have therefore developed an action inquiry with mules rather than for mules. This steps over the threshold that has been reified by the mule’s perceived linguistic limitations and our own uncertainty when it comes to deciding whether we are

advocating for or, indeed, dialoguing with the mule. In considering this question, we are led to consider the underlying purpose of this inquiry. Is it purely *instrumental* in the sense that it yields improvements in practice? Is it *interpretive* in the sense that it aims to inform the wise and prudent decision making of practitioners? Or is it, in fact, emancipatory in the sense that it seeks to emancipate people from “determination by habit, custom, illusion and coercion which sometimes frame and constrain social and educational practice” (Kemmis, 2006, p. 95)? I believe that it can be all three and could even prove to be emancipatory for the mule.

An emancipatory view recognises the need to improve our self-understanding and address collective misunderstandings about the nature of muleteering practice and how it has been shaped and re-shaped culturally, socially, historically and discursively. Developing the latent potential for travel and tourism to facilitate change is thus a disruptive force that can be harnessed wherever there is a willingness to listen. This project is therefore emancipatory for, in the same way that the political dimension of action research asserts the importance of “liberating the muted voices of those held down by class structures and neo-colonialism, by poverty, sexism, racism and homophobia” (Reason and Bradbury, 2006, p. 10), this research project gives voice to the mule and allows that voice to be heard and respected.

The mule has so often been excluded from narratives and negotiations. Our understanding of the reasons for this will be developed in the thesis as we start to see the gaps in our awareness through which the mule disappears. To participate in this story, the mule must be given a voice and allowed to take up their rightful place. This is not just a question of placing the mule on stage and then raising the curtain to reveal her in all her glory. To bring her back in, to enable her to speak and be heard, to allow her to be seen and honoured, to know her story and feel her presence, requires us to prepare the stage for her arrival. It requires us to open our minds and hearts to the mule. It challenges us to love her and interweave her story into our own.

Bringing the mule in is the story of what the mule taught me and how this developed my ability to learn from and with other mules. There will be those who state, paraphrasing Wittgenstein, that even if mules could talk, we would not be able to understand them. This idea emanates from the divisions and distinctions that language and reason allow

us to make. But, as de Fontenay (2008) points out, if God speaks to us by the prayers that we address to him, where the language of animals is concerned, perhaps it is sufficient simply to speak to (and indeed with) them. Merrifield (2008, p. 79) similarly highlights the importance attached in the Koran to the prophet's ability to speak to and with donkeys. The ability to commune with animals is accorded to some and not to others. According to de Fontenay, the ability to commune with those who are silent to us, whether they be animals or those we have lost is not granted to all. It is, in fact, a gift of translation.

In describing the person who can speak (or whisper) with animals as sharp of hearing or graced with the gift of translation and understanding, their status as dumb animals, as silent creatures, is questioned. The metaphors used to describe the ways by which we can break into this mysterious 'other world' include 'remedies', passwords, rituals and shibboleths⁷⁹. Humankind has thus always wrestled with the challenge of breaching these barriers of incomprehension. But how is this to be done? How can one address what Pierre Enoff has called 'the silence of horses' and appreciate what we humans have inflicted on all equines by our reluctance and inability to commune with them?

That no-one has yet dared to undertake AR with animals reflects perhaps the uncertainties and tensions raised when viewing them as subjects with something to say. I argue, however, that any interpretation of a mule's experiences is not meant to be definitive or absolute. It is proposed, instead, as a question for curious exploration and deliberation, an opportunity for us to examine our own sources and determine where we are operating from and how we are impacting on the mule and on mule welfare. I argue that we realise this when we learn to see ourselves mirrored in the mule. The

⁷⁹ «... on découvre en effet, chez Virgile et Michelet, dans le lien que l'historien entretient avec le poète, l'évocation d'une secrète analogie entre les animaux et les à demi vivants que sont pour nous les morts. *Autres* qu'il est difficile, voire dangereux d'approcher. Avant de les rencontrer, il faut se munir d'un mot de passe, d'un *schibboleth*, d'un rituel, d'un instrument orphique, ce qui n'exclut cependant pas l'effort et l'endurance. Ce pouvoir énigmatique, on peut le nommer indifféremment, finesse de l'oreille ou don de la *traduction*. La grâce est accordée à certains et refusée à d'autres, qui permet d'entendre et de comprendre le parler des à jamais silencieux, et d'administrer un remède à cette immémoriale séparation entre les bêtes et les hommes qu'on nomme pompeusement la différence zoo-anthropologique.» (de Fontenay, 2008, pp. 20-21).

mule thus has the power to transform those of us who are willing to listen and worthy of her trust by dint of the re-gard we afford her.

By attending to the mule's legendary ability to say 'NO!', by co-sensing and co-creating alternative futures with them, I believe I can go as far as Savage-Rumbaugh⁸⁰ does with her bonobos and claim co-authorship with mules. By paying close attention to how the mule and I negotiated our journey together, I argue that we co-authored an understanding.

My role thus needs to be understood in terms of this wider participatory approach. It involved establishing spaces for dialogue, helping others to see and hear, facilitating their inquiries and bringing mules in as members of a community of inquiry, to amplify their whisperings and explore what emerges from a more inclusive discursive regeneration of practice. This project can therefore be characterised as a step into the unknown, a journey that presents those involved with a series of trials that they must meet and overcome. In doing so, the boundary of what is possible shifts. Each journey or cycle of learning yields a boon (Campbell, 2008, pp. 205-209) that the guide can share with others who wish to undertake a similar journey. This project consisted of a succession of journeys undertaken with travelling companions from across the social field (Figure 1.2).

Revisioning, reshaping and regenerating the relationship between humans and non-humans⁸¹ are creative processes that demand practical engagement to evolve and direct our skilful being in the world. We now turn to the specific AR approach that underpinned the co-seeing, co-sensing and co-creating journeys that allowed awareness of the mule and mule welfare to emerge and alternative futures to be explored.

⁸⁰ Savage Rumbaugh et al (2007).

⁸¹ and specifically, in this case, the gendered relationship between man and mule.

4.2.3 Theory U

Theory U's merits lie in its emphasis on awareness raising and dialogue and on helping individuals and complex systems see themselves as co-creators of the many problems we face in today's globalised industries. Co-seeing and co-sensing journeys are integral to the change enquiry advocated by Theory U and were used to tackle the invisibility of the mule and of mule welfare within the mountain tourism industry.

This approach to change has been pioneered by Otto Scharmer and his colleagues at MIT as a way of exploring and supporting change in people, organisations and society (Senge et al, 2004). It builds on the work of reflective practitioners (Schön, 1983/2016) and the action and reflective turns in social science to propose an “advanced social sciences methodology that integrates science (third-person view), social transformation (second-person view) and the evolution of self (first person view) into a coherent framework of consciousness-based action research” (Scharmer, 2009, p. 16).

This approach's transformative potential derives from its focus on the field structures of awareness and how these affect the quality of attention, dialogue and encounter or experience. These, in turn, determine the constitution of the collective (or community) and the future that emerges through collective action (Figures 4.1-4.3). Shifting our field of awareness allows us to engage in dialogue and, eventually, generative dialogue (Figure 4.3). I recognised early on the need to engineer situations that gave rise to reflective inquiry, dialogue and generative flow. Failure to do so simply gave rise to polite or defensive answers⁸² rather than deep reflection and creative thinking. In other words, the low-energy interactions characterised by *I-in-Me* and *I-in-It* field structure of attention gives rise to rule reproduction and rule contextualisation. This is unhelpful because it does not expose and explore hidden assumptions and habits of thought and does not therefore allow welfare to be considered in a deep, critical and meaningful manner. When operating from an *I-in-You* or *I-in-Now*⁸³ state, by contrast, one starts to relate to and connect with the field; a higher energy state is reached that gives rise to rule evolving and then rule generating behaviour (Figure 4.3).

⁸² That curtail inquiry resulting in a “shallow dive” that only travels so far down the U.

⁸³ This occurs when operating from beyond one's periphery or from a place in which one is able to permeate all of one's open boundaries.

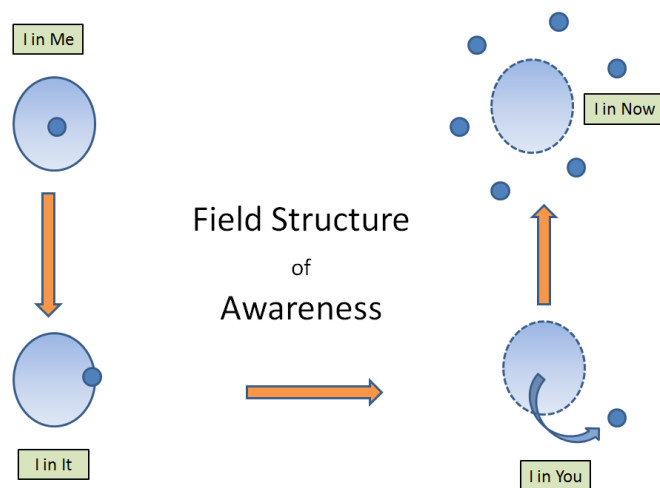


Figure 4.1: There are four different sources from which fields of attention come into existence and from which social action emerges (Scharmer, 2009). Each gives rise to a different level of listening, representing a shift from ego-centric awareness to eco-centric awareness, that arises when our attention emanates from a different source.

Field Structure of Attention	Field	
I in Me	Downloading <i>talking nice</i>	Speaking from what they want to hear <i>Autistic system: polite routines, empty phrases, not saying what you think.</i>
I in It	Debate <i>talking tough</i>	Speaking from what I think <i>Adaptive system: divergent views, saying what you think – I am my point of view.</i>
I in You	Dialogue <i>reflective inquiry</i>	Speaking from seeing myself as part of the whole <i>Self-Reflective system: from defending to inquiry into viewpoints. Reflection on the part of each individual.</i>
I in Now	Presencing <i>generative flow</i>	Speaking from what is moving through <i>Generative system: Stillness, collective creativity and flow giving rise to identity shift and the authentic self</i>

Figure 4.2: A shift in the field of attention involves a move from seeing the system as something external to yourself or your organisation to seeing yourself as part of the system. This shift allows the quality of communication to evolve from downloading to generative dialogue.

Field Structure of Attention	Experiential Outcome	Constitution of the Collective	Patterns of Emergence
I in Me	Low Energy	Conforming	Rule Reproduction
I in It	Medium Energy	Confronting	Rule Contextualisation
I in You	High Energy	Relating	Rule Evolving
I in Now	Extremely High Energy	Collectively Connecting	Rule Generating

Figure 4.3: The field structure of attention impacts on communication, energy, group work and patterns of emergence.

This distinction is important for it determines how we attend in any given moment. The journey down the U, described by Scharmer (Figure 4.4) represents an opening⁸⁴ to new awareness. Repeatedly undertaking the U-journey allows us to better understand the practices that give rise to awareness and, conversely, the practices that have resulted in individuals and organisations developing pathological blindness and collective amnesia. These have been described by Tignor (2005, p. 141) as the anti-practices of blinding, desensing and absencing and stand in opposition to the practices that give rise to awareness (Figure 4.5). If I am emphasising these two opposing cycles, it is because transformative change requires people not to absent themselves but, instead, to attend, to make themselves available to the other and to other possibilities. It is precisely in this moment of attending that my contribution as a researcher and change agent is centred (Figure 4.6); it is at this point that the mule and her welfare can be seen with fresh eyes and curiosity. It is also at this point that old ways of seeing can be recognised and juxtaposed with the new. This juxtaposition of competing narratives is disturbing and disruptive and often meets with resistance. This resistance is typically born of judgement, cynicism and fear and must be addressed if deeper journeys down the U are to be undertaken and alternative narratives explored. Theory U emphasises the need for 'holding places' (Scharmer, 2011, pp. 187-188): safe 'social spaces' in which this can happen. The protective nature of these spaces can be likened to that provided by the womb or chrysalis, environments that cocoon and foster the right sheltering conditions for development. This is as true of growing, developing sentient living creatures as it is of any new prototype⁸⁵. Anything new, anything different will, after all, be targeted by the body or society's immune systems because it threatens the status quo; this is why a protective space is required (Scharmer, 2011, p. 210). It is precisely this holding space that the journey or the expedition, can provide for young people on the cusp of adulthood (Loynes, 2010) and for muleteers being asked to try out new practices. These journeys provide a space or place that dislocates, offering contrast, new

⁸⁴ An opening in the sense that it opens up a new possibility, one that opens minds, hearts and wills. It is also an opening in the sense of 'holding open' for not only must the door be held open for those undertaking the journey to walk through, the holding space in which new experiences are understood must also be held open.

⁸⁵ This term is a key part of Theory U and refers to the development of a new or novel idea for trialling.

perspectives and possibilities that allow new ways of being to be experienced and rehearsed (Loynes, 2010, p. 13)⁸⁶.

What does this account of awareness mean for the practice of a co-operative inquiry with mules, muleteers and the wider mountain tourism industry? Essentially, it represents a switch in focus from the practices of mule welfare to the practices of meeting and dialoguing. It allows people to meet genuinely without agendas. It fosters a community of inquiry that supports the exploration of factual, practical and Self-awareness, resulting in dialogue and even generative dialogue. This allows us to become aware of welfare problems (Opening our Minds) and how we attend to them. It is then possible to go beyond seeing the problem as something external to us as we develop an awareness of the nested relations in which the welfare problem is situated and of how we are collectively and individually responsible for the problem (Opening our Hearts). Awareness of self (our feelings, thoughts, actions and purpose) then affords us the opportunity to change our practices and take responsibility (Opening our Wills).

⁸⁶ Pedagogically speaking, this can be viewed as a Labovian⁸⁶ approach in which the journey undertaken represents a retreat from normality that provides 'complicating factors' together with opportunities for revealing, exploring and discussing different values but also to explore narratives of the past and, perhaps most significantly, of the future (Loynes, 2010, pp. 14-15).

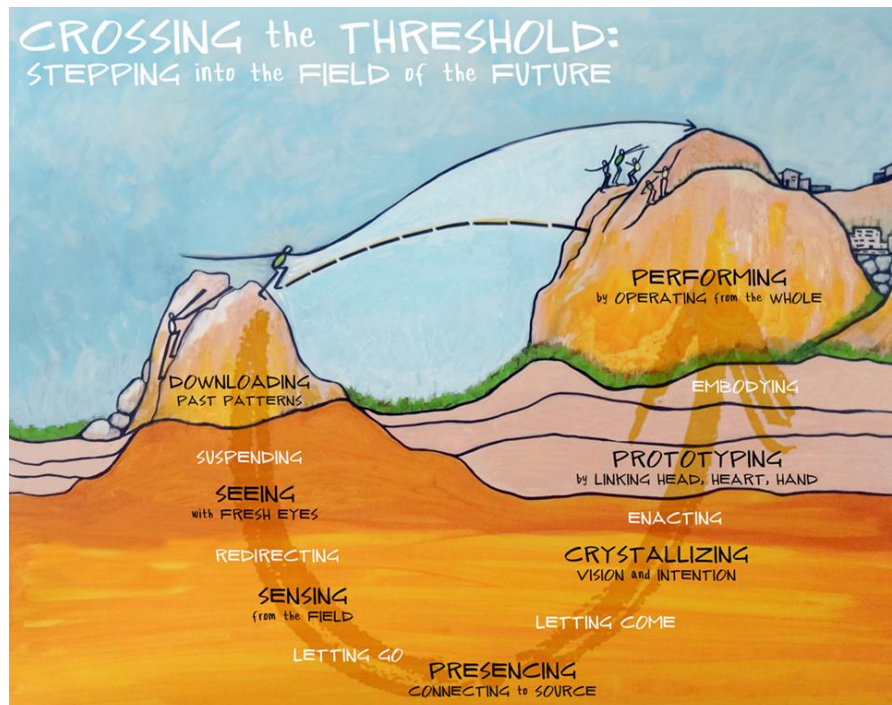


Figure 4.4: Theory U is a model for change proposed by Scharmer (2009). According to Senge et al (2005, p. 103), "when we start down the left side of the U, we experience the world as something given, something 'out there'. Gradually, we shift our perception to seeing from inside the living process underlying the reality. Then, as we move up the right-hand side of the U, we start to experience the world unfolding through us." The left and right-hand sides of the U present us with a series of thresholds as we move from downloading, to suspending, redirecting, presencing, crystallising, prototyping and performing. Crossing these thresholds takes us from the self "as an observer of an exterior world which is a creation of the past" to the self as a "source through which the future begins to emerge." Prototyping in this sense means exploring new ways of working with, travelling with and relating to the mule.

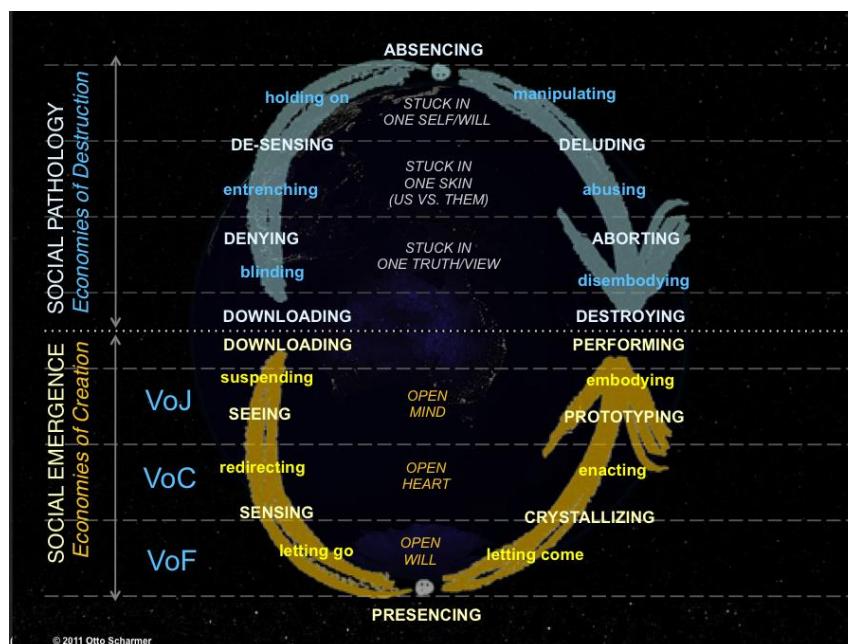


Figure 4.5: The cycles of absencing and presencing that are used to understand how awareness of mule welfare can be developed across the community (Scharmer, 2011)⁸⁷.

⁸⁷ <https://www.presencing.com/principles>

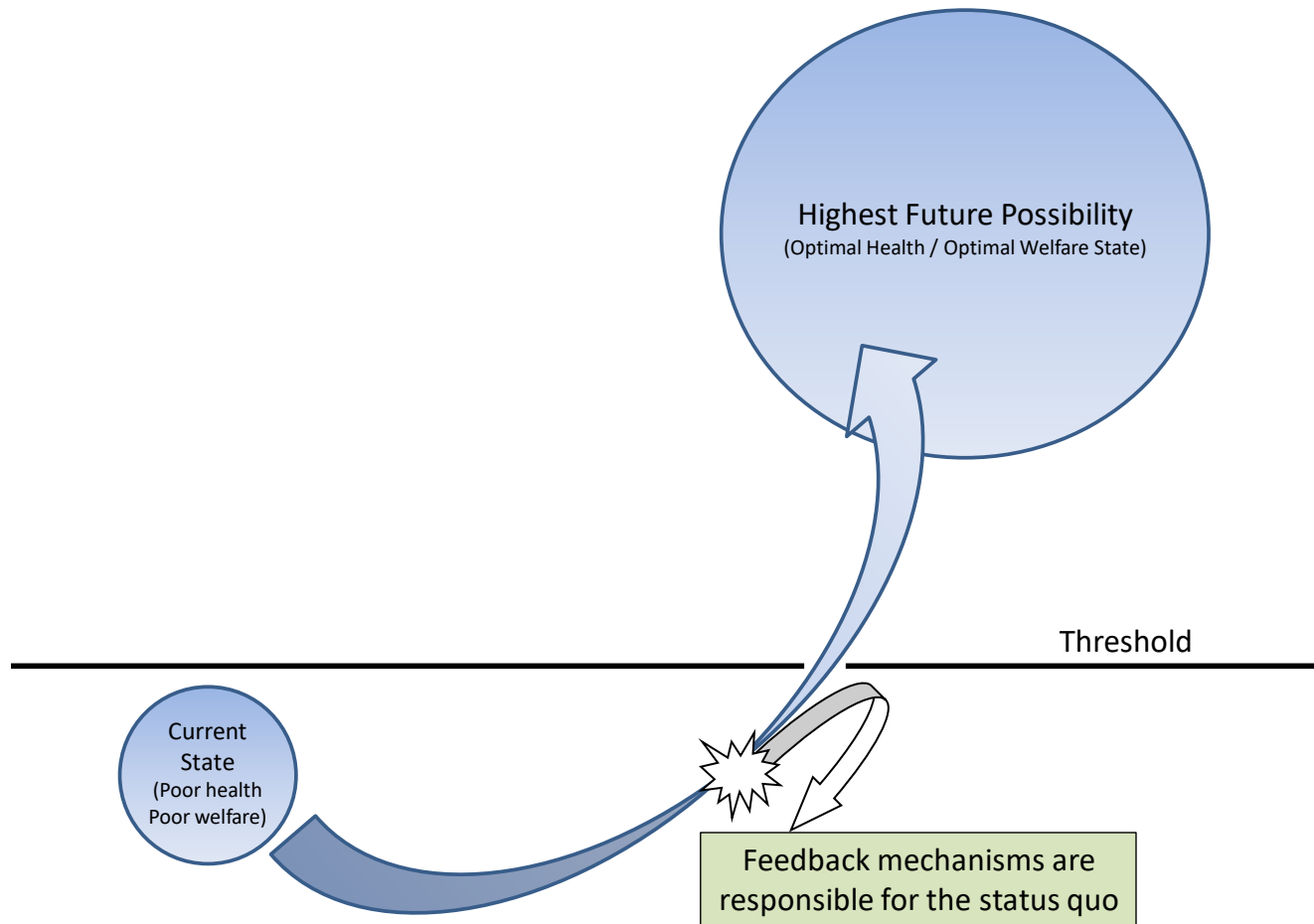


Figure 4.6: The U Journey towards optimal welfare: The current equilibrium state is one of poor welfare. It passes unseen and unrecognised as a problem by the wider industry for a range of reasons. Those involved are similarly oblivious to the mechanisms and habits of thought and action that allow it to persist and that must be overcome if the threshold is to be crossed and a higher welfare state attained. Breaking through the threshold means attending, being present, choosing presencing over absencing. This step into the unknown is profoundly significant: *lactea alea est* - the die is cast, there is no turning back, change ensues. As further thresholds are crossed and changes made, progress is made toward a more optimal state. Typically, such steps into the unknown require an opportunity (denoted here by the star) in which to redirect attention (co-see and co-sense) and co-create something new founded on common intentions.

4.3 *The Researcher*

4.3.1 *Positionality*

The following pages provide a frank account of my own positionality as a white, male, educated, western professional with a highly unusual skill set and a desire to see mule welfare improved and how this may have contributed to the knowledge creation process. For Haraway (1991, p. 193), “positioning is the key practice grounding knowledge” because position indicates the kind of power that enabled a certain kind of knowledge (Rose, 1999, p. 308). I acknowledge that my ability to represent the situated knowledge (and how it was transformed) of the community of knowers who I brought together and worked with, is imperfect, as is my ability to provide a transparently understandable account of self and context (Rose, 1999, p. 318). I further recognise that any attempt to translate local knowledge into academic knowledge is deeply regulated by power relations (Madge, 1993; Smith, 1996) and that my own attempt is likely to be biased by my desire to bring in the mule and have her listened to. Whilst recognising that, I am also aware that this research endeavour sought to facilitate an emergent future in which identities and practices evolve, consistent with a vision of research as a process of constitutive negotiation in which no participants are left unchanged (Gibson-Graham, 1994, pp. 214-220; Rose, 1997, pp. 315-316).

Sensing

The development of self-awareness is crucial if one is to account for one's own footprint as a research tool. It requires the researcher become a listening tool, a sensing tool. This awareness has to be cultivated so that one becomes aware of the voices of judgement, cynicism and fear creeping in. In this way, "our work in the 'outer projects' rests on how far we get with our inner project" (Wadsworth, 2006, p. 328)⁸⁸. This kind of study therefore demands not science, but artistry⁸⁹ (Hartman, 1990). As researcher, I therefore found myself developing my creative side, and curiosity, suspending my judgements, cynicism and fear and redirecting my attention to what was in front of me.

⁸⁸ Or, as Nietzsche puts it, “in order to see much, one must learn to look away from oneself.”

⁸⁹ Iris Murdoch (1970, p. 58) captures this exquisitely when she says that "we cease to be in order to attend to the existence of something else, a natural object, a person in need. We can see in mediocre art, where perhaps it is even more clearly seen than in mediocre conduct, the intrusion of fantasy, the assertion of self, the dimming of any reflection of the real world."

It was by immersing myself in mules and mule welfare that I developed my awareness of self and of mules. In establishing a relationship with a mule, I started to understand what they sense and how it is possible to co-sense, to negotiate a common understanding that makes common sense of the world. The resulting understanding saw a team - a hybrid even - emerge: one that sensed together. Having learnt and embodied this sensing, I sought out those whose actions impact on the mule to share⁹⁰ with them the insights garnered and explore that which they have failed to see, sense, know, understand, recognise and appreciate. This was difficult at many levels. It involved challenge and confrontation. It also involves knowing, caring and loving and this brings with it great pain for the journey is an emotional one, one that is profoundly disturbing and upsetting, one that demands great integrity (Peck, 1987, pp. 234-253)⁹¹.

Learning to evaluate mule welfare

I am fortunate to have trained and worked as a veterinarian⁹². As such, I developed an extensive range of clinical and non-clinical skills that make it easier to approach, handle and examine animals. I also hold a postgraduate award in Zoological Medicine, a discipline that taught me to adapt to a wide range of wildlife species from across the world. This has left me with an unusually broad experience base and skill set, leaving me better equipped to evaluate health and welfare in a range of different situations and from a range of different perspectives.

My own approach to animal behaviour and communication has developed from my practice as a wildlife vet working in zoo, wildlife, avian and exotic animal medicine. As part of this, I developed the necessary awareness of, and sensitivity to, a range of vertebrate species that is required when handling the diversity of species encountered in zoo and wildlife practice. This fed into several publications, conference presentations and training courses on the subject (Cousquer, 2005a; 2005b; 2006a; 2006b; 2006c; Cousquer and Parsons, 2007) and is further reflected in contributions I made to a chapter on dog handling, restraint and behaviour (Gould, 2014, pp. 206-223).

⁹⁰ In some cases, this involved confronting them. Such confrontational experiences were uncomfortable and challenging; they did, however, afford me the opportunity to reflect on my own intentions and values and therefore my positionality and the impact I might be having on those with whom I was engaging.

⁹¹ See also Brené Brown (2015) on integrity and wholeheartedness.

⁹² I qualified from the University of Edinburgh in 1997 and spent ten years in practice before returning to the University to study for a Masters in Outdoor Education.

I have, furthermore, been studying the welfare of mules working in the Moroccan mountain tourism industry since 2008. In doing so, I worked closely with The Donkey Sanctuary UK and benefited from training and exchanges on the development of their hand model of welfare. I developed this further as a tool to support the development of the Expedition Provider's Association Charter for Care of Working Mules (Cousquer, 2015). Key to this welfare model is an emphasis on communication and behaviour and therefore on relationships.⁹³ Training in animal behaviour and, in particular, 'shaping' with Ben Hart at The Donkey Sanctuary helped further develop and evolve my approach so that it is much more attuned to the animal.

My approach to evaluating welfare thus draws on a rich and varied background of practical experience in animal health and welfare. This has benefited from further development in the field during work in Morocco (Cousquer, 2008; 2009; 2014; 2015; Cousquer and Alyakine, 2012; 2014a; 2014b). This included the teaching of mule handling, mule behaviour and mule examination and assessment (Figure 4.7) at the mountain guide training school (CFAMM) and to a Moroccan veterinary student, whose doctoral field work on mule welfare I supervised between December 2013-April 2014 (Figures 4.8a-4.8b)⁹⁴. This prolonged immersion in different communities of practice provided exposure to a wide range of mule welfares and opportunities for ideas and practices to be discussed and criticised over a period of eight years (2008-2016).

⁹³ The emphasis on relationships was to become the central theme and focus of this body of work.

⁹⁴ This allowed for evaluation of different survey and assessment techniques, including clinical examinations, semi-structured interviews, home visits and ethnographic observations.



Figure 4.7: Performing a flexion test on a lame mule with arthritis of the hock in front of students at the CFAMM. This not only raises awareness of the pain experienced by the mule as a result of this condition, it draws the students and the wider community into a dialogue about how welfare is practised and co-created and how it could be improved.



Figures 4.8a-b: Teaching the veterinary student how to examine the mule and assess welfare required that I demonstrate how to pick up all four limbs safely and effectively on any mule. This potentially dangerous intervention requires a thorough evaluation of the mule's temperament and clear communication with both the mule and mule handler.



Learning to guide

I trained as a Mountain Leader in 1997, qualifying in 2001⁹⁵. Drawing on this, together with my experience as an outdoor educator, reflective practitioner and facilitator, I have developed a particular approach to experiential and reflective learning. Guiding is an experiential endeavour, one that sees the guide mediating an encounter and thereby facilitating a journey of discovery, learning and development. The focus is on the here-and-now; the journey is thus prioritised over the destination. This approach draws on the Deweyan experiential pedagogy that underpinned the educational philosophy I deployed when teaching at the CFAMM, where. learning objectives extended "far beyond the mere acquisition of a set of technical skills and theoretical knowledge", emphasising instead the need for guides "to apply the art and science of mule husbandry and care in their work, developing their practical judgement and learning to act wisely in the face of various challenges." It further emphasised that guides "need to learn to see the mules as part of their team and manage them accordingly" (Cousquer, 2009, p. 24).

I developed an awareness of how to create spaces and places in which the mule and mule welfare can appear and be reimagined, thereby contributing to the regeneration of the relationship between man and mule. My experience as a vet, International Mountain Leader, experiential educator and facilitator left me uniquely qualified to mentor and accompany those who are willing to explore what mule welfare could and should be. It prepared me as an *accompagnateur* and equipped me to bridge the three interacting domains of activity within a learning community, namely research, capacity building and practice (Figure 4.9; see also Senge and Scharmer, 2006, p. 197). Perhaps most importantly it helped develop my awareness of and from the field and of the meta-knowledge that starts to emerge when the field starts to function as a learning community.

⁹⁵ I subsequently completed both the Winter and International Mountain Leader awards in 2013.

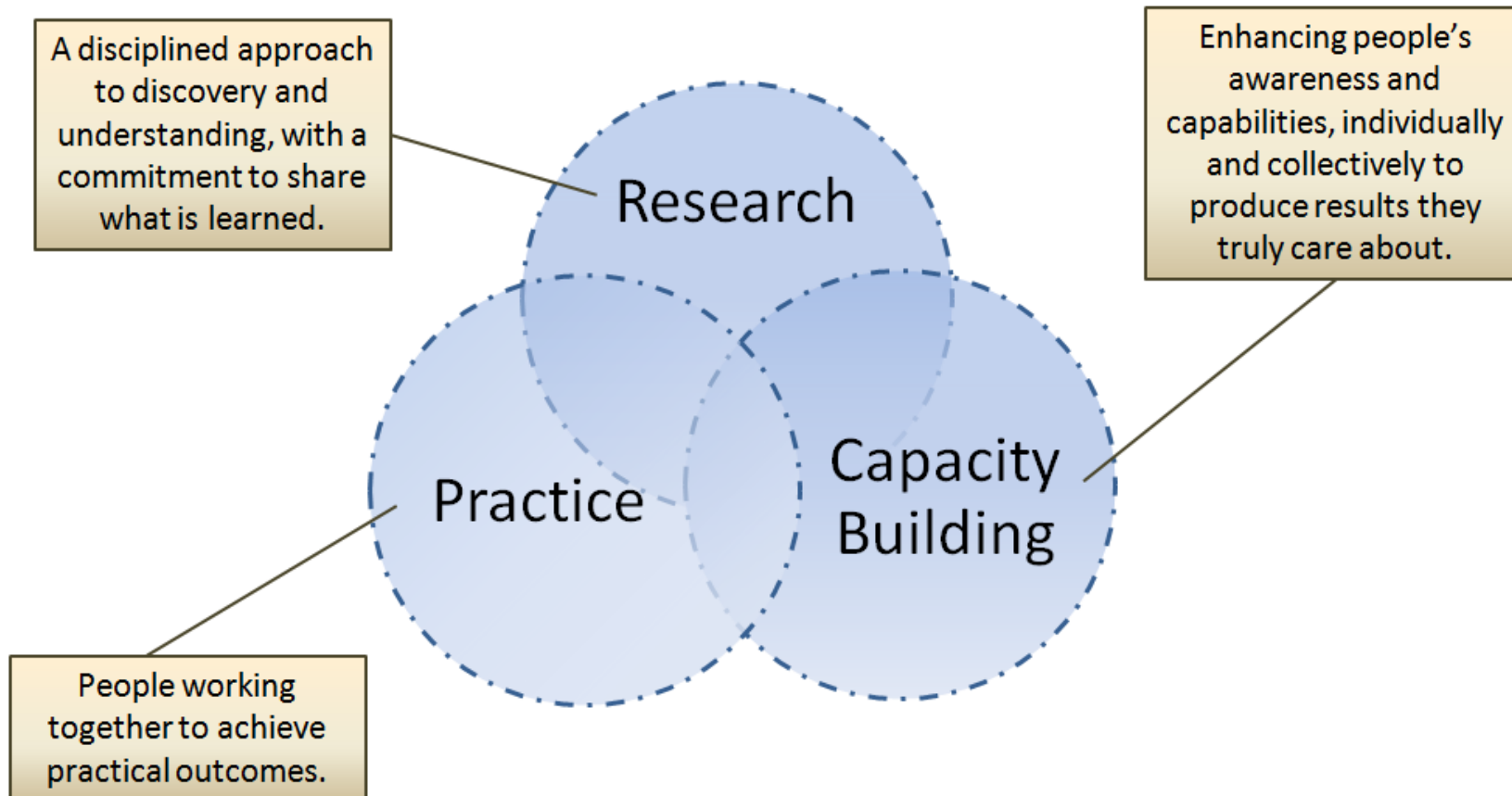


Figure 4.9: Learning communities are collections of people working together to nurture and sustain a knowledge-creating system. The researcher needs to be able to circulate across the fields that make up the learning community, linking them up and addressing the fragmentary forces that draws practitioners in each domain inwards, thereby reinforcing their separate islands of activity. The guiding role of the researcher is therefore to keep the bubbles porous and promote awareness of the field and the creation and flow of knowledge.

Having considered my positionality, I now turn to the opportunities that I have had to identify and create to enter and work in the field. These opportunities have directly affected the choice⁹⁶ of research participants and partners; they have, in turn, structured the ways in which the field has been explored and mapped and how such maps influence each subsequent journey beyond the threshold.

4.3.2 Entering, working in and mapping the field

Entering the field of international mountain tourism is complex and challenging for it spans several continents, time zones, cultures, communities, professions, practices and activities⁹⁷. Cousquer and Allison (2012, p. 1848)⁹⁸ mapped the supply chain of services connecting the trekker with the mule. Significant gaps exist between the disconnected narratives of the different actors whose actions impact on the mule, without anyone taking responsibility for the mule's welfare. Accessing the places in which awareness of mule welfare figures and fails to figure is needed if these stories are to be stitched together and a collective awareness established.

Developing a presence in these places and the necessary opportunities to study what goes on there led me first to the rich body of literature on ethnography. Ethnography, perhaps better than any other methodological approach to research, allows the exquisite detail of practices-on-the-move to be captured and understood, exploring "lived experience in all its richness and complexity", focusing "on how processes and meanings structure sociospatial life" (Herbert, 2000, p. 551). The richest studies of animal-human relations are rich precisely because they demonstrate the depth and detail of understanding born of years of study. Michele Salmona's own work on "les paysans français" reflects over thirty years of field work and is a particularly fine example. Inspired by the understanding that courses through this great work on rural life, I myself entered the field believing that a prolonged immersion was the way to go.

North Africa, and Morocco in particular, have provided material for a long line of eminent socio-anthropologists, including Berque (1978), Bourdieu (1964; 2008; 2012), Geertz (1971; 1972; 1995), Hart (1981; 1984) and Rabinow (2007). This rich history is

⁹⁶ A better word might be recruitment or enrolment (see Zander and Zander, 2000, pp. 123-139).

⁹⁷ The field is thus characterised by its dynamic complexity.

⁹⁸ See also Cousquer and Alyakine (2014a)

critically reviewed by Hassan Rachik (2012)⁹⁹ who traces the shifting ways in which researchers have entered, and engaged with, the field. I found inspiration too in the ethnographies of guiding produced by Beedie (2003), of the pastoralists of the Moroccan High Atlas (Gregorio, 2010; Mahdi, 1999)¹⁰⁰ and of the Vanoise National Park¹⁰¹ (Mauz, 2005), of reindeer herders in the Cairngorms (Lorimer, 2006) and of ethologists working with meerkats in the Kalahari (Candea, 2010). Journeying alone can give rise to studies of an auto-ethnographic nature (Nicol, 2012), whilst travelling alone with a donkey or mule, as epitomised by Stevenson's "Travels with a donkey" (2012) and Merrifield's "The wisdom of donkeys" (2008) are obvious extensions of this.

Any ethnographic study of mule welfare in the mountain tourism industry involves journeying through time and space. Such ethnographies are, by definition, multi-sited (Hannerz, 2003), focussing both on the animal and the emergent human-animal relations and understandings that arise through and in such forms of itinerant living and their accompanying practices. These journeys unfold and are thus amenable to study. I, however, felt duty-bound to pursue a vision of optimal welfare thereby pursuing alternative unfoldings. The study that emerged was therefore active in constructing welfare, in bringing it into awareness and developing muleteering practices that acknowledge, understand and respect the mule. I thus came to enter the field as a guide and as an action researcher.

Entering the field meant finding entry points. I was faced with the challenge of establishing a network of contacts and gate keepers across communities spanning the entire mountain tourism industry. Some of these emerged through working at the guide school or as a guide, some as a product of friendships, some from publishing articles, some from speaking at meetings. There was no magic recipe. Several promising avenues proved dead ends¹⁰². They closed, as opportunities for various reasons,

⁹⁹ See also Rachik, 1993 and 2010.

¹⁰⁰ For the cultural significance of this work see also Mahdi & Dominguez (2009) and Mahdi (2010).

¹⁰¹ The Vanoise National Park is France's first National Park, in the same way that the Toubkal National Park is Morocco's first such park. It too has a long history of muleteering with the 'Route du sel et des tômes' that saw mules carry salt and cheese across the high passes to Italy, now becoming increasingly recognised as a part of the area's human (and animal?) heritage. The Vanoise is also an area in which the author has spent a significant amount of time working as a guide (IML).

¹⁰² I had, for example, planned to undertake a number of treks as a guide for Outlook Expeditions. In the end, I was unable to do these as I was unable to make the necessary trips back to the UK to meet the teams at school and contribute to their training and preparation.

sometimes because what was being asked of a participant was too much or was incomprehensible, sometimes because the participant did not see any reason to engage with me, listen to me, spend time with or help me. Entering the field was thus exhausting at times, demanding persistence, imagination and creativity.

The following list of activities and roles provides some indication of the networks that I had to establish to enter the field:

- i. local resident.
- ii. instructor at the guide school.
- iii. supervisor of a doctoral student.
- iv. trekker.
- v. guide.
- vi. employer / source of employment or work.
- vii. consultant to the trekking industry.
- viii. lecturer / speaker at various meetings on the welfare of working equines.
- ix. author of articles on pack mule welfare.
- x. contributor to a mule's Facebook page.
- xi. designer of equipment.
- xii. source of equipment.
- xiii. provider of training.
- xiv. UIMLA representative appointed to mentor Morocco as an aspirant member of UIMLA¹⁰³.
- xv. welfare auditor and report writer.
- xvi. a source of irritation for some.

¹⁰³ Initially, this involved building on my relationship with the President of UIMLA after meeting him at the BAIML Annual General Meeting, in Chamonix, in December 2013. After becoming a Director of BAIML and subsequently, President, I became the BAIML representative to UIMLA and started attending their meetings. This means that I was privy to and contributed to all discussions concerning Morocco's application to be an aspirant member.

Rabinow (2007) describes how opportunities presented themselves during his fieldwork in Morocco and how he cultivated potential gatekeepers. He also details the constant probing and testing he was subjected to as community members sought to explore who he was and what he was good for. In my own case, local people were interested in me because I might be able to provide them with contacts, work opportunities, information, equipment and, of course, friendship. Disinterest and even suspicion also characterised the relationship, especially when it was I that was seeking something.

An ability to make myself known opened other parts of the field: Companies started coming to me for advice and my relationship with local people evolved as it became harder for them to ignore mule welfare. At one point, I was described as 'slippery as a fish' by a guide, who realised he was encountering mule welfare at every turn and could not get away from it. What I had to offer people and how I interacted with the field thus evolved throughout my fieldwork.

This dramatic reconfiguration of my field(s) of study can be traced back to an enquiry I received from Far Frontiers Expeditions (FFE), a British expeditions company, whose owner, Chris Short, had long been disgusted by the state of mules and donkeys in Morocco. On the 30th March 2014, he contacted me unexpectedly (Appendix 1), after reading posts I had shared on the British Association of International Mountain Leader (BAIML) Facebook page. He wanted me to help his company develop a mule welfare initiative. There then followed a lengthy correspondence that developed our understanding of our different perspectives on the expeditions industry. We met in July 2014 to explore potential projects; this led to the trialling¹⁰⁴ of a two-day project in October 2014. These developments marked the start of my involvement with the Expedition Providers Association (EPA), of which FFE is a member.

This unexpected but fortuitous turn of events led, that Autumn, to my invitation to speak at a gathering of EPA members with operations in Morocco and other industry insiders including representatives of the Royal Geographic Society. Before I knew it, Chris and his team had put together the EPA Charter of Care for Care of Working Mules and were organising a conference for their ground handlers in Morocco. I was able to

¹⁰⁴ An early exercise in prototyping.

follow this development and comment and advise on the content. Once this had been developed, further input was required to support its implementation on the ground.

My role in the field was thus transformed from one of studying, probing, observing and challenging to one of actively supporting change. It was further transformed when, in parallel, an opportunity arose to train a young mule (of which more later). This mid-stream change was significant: In the same way that the arrival of the wolf in the *Parc National de la Vanoise* during the course of Isabel Mauz's fieldwork on pastoralists in the Park, impacted on and transformed her study, the arrival of the EPA initiative and the young mule similarly transformed mine.

Whilst Mauz was certainly in no way responsible for introducing the wolf into the National Park or, indeed, into her study, the same cannot be said of my own work and intervention(s) in the field. The creation of the EPA Charter drew heavily on guidelines I had produced in my earlier work (Cousquer, 2011a) and its development had to be nurtured and guided. That does not mean that I either instigated or directed the process, a fact reflected in the structure adopted by the report. My role was primarily that of a consultant providing advice, feedback and support.

As the EPA project developed and gathered speed, opportunities emerged to support the companies' preparations for the 2015 and subsequent trekking seasons. In this respect, narratives started to merge and complement each other: Many of the muleteers I knew before the EPA initiative started, worked for these companies. I was therefore suddenly afforded opportunities to work alongside them and involve them in reflective learning sessions that would never have been possible had there not been this change in my role¹⁰⁵.

4.3.3 *Gate keepers and co-workers*

This project would not have been possible without considerable investment in the relationships I developed over the period 2008-2017.

¹⁰⁵ I was suddenly able to ask questions of and scrutinise practice that were impossible before: Adopting the role of instructor and guide meant that those I was working with found themselves having to explore and analyse their practices in ways that were unavailable to me as a low status observer.

Many of these relationships were genuine long-standing friendships. Brahim, for example, is someone I have trekked with on many occasions¹⁰⁶ over the past decade and with whom I have stayed whenever visiting the area. Ours is a friendship based on mutual respect, born of shared experiences, trust (the kind that takes on real meaning when you place your life in somebody's hands in the mountains) and a genuine liking for each other. I have seen three of his four daughters grow up and marry, his house extended, his sons failing at school and their life prospects melt away before their eyes. I have visited, spent time with and interviewed his aging father who is now virtually blind and housebound. I have helped harvest the family's peas and beans. I have entrusted British school children to him and his daughters so that they can experience life in a Berber home. I have seen his grandchildren start walking and learn to climb.

This friendship proved invaluable when surveying the mules of the village for Brahim introduced me to every¹⁰⁷ male in the village with a mule and persuaded them to be interviewed and have their mules examined. When working together I ensured he was paid his daily rate by the groups or individuals I asked him to guide. He, however, chose not to charge me. He did, however, expect me to provide free equipment for the mules wherever possible. This generated good will with the mule owners of his village though it was hard to explain that the head collars were being provided on condition that they would be used to lead the mules.

Other collaborators, including many of the local guides I had trained, could not be offered work in the same way that I could with Brahim¹⁰⁸. Relationships therefore evolved from that of teacher-student¹⁰⁹ established at the guide school. In some cases, I found myself helping them prepare CVs or writing them references. In other cases, I could pass on books, clothing or equipment to them. My rucksack was therefore often stocked up with texts on birds, mountain craft as well as dictionaries and other such reference sources. During 2015, I put several of my best students forward for a salaried

¹⁰⁶ Brahim thus has benefited from employment opportunities here as I had previously paid him for organising treks and showing me areas that I was unfamiliar with, including the Siroua (2010) and the Western High Atlas (2011). We made two treks together in 2014 and one in 2015. I also sent him clients on other occasions, including a large group from the University of Edinburgh, in 2013.

¹⁰⁷ With perhaps two or three refusals out of over eighty mule owners.

¹⁰⁸ On one or two occasions, guides who were hoping and even expecting work showed their displeasure when I explained to them that I could not summon up work for everybody. Other guides would email every now and again asking for work or reminding me to think of them should work crop up.

¹⁰⁹ Many of these young guides referred to me as 'mon professeur'.

post with the French Alpine Club in Casablanca. After several rounds of interview, one of them was appointed as manager for the CAF's refugees in Morocco. On another occasion, I organised and ran with an IML colleague, two separate two-day far-from-help first aid courses. Twelve local guides thus received free specialist training.

Relationship building with agencies was also critical and I had to explore how best I could establish a connection that guaranteed their ear and support. This is difficult given the competing calls on their time and resources. Feedback had to be produced in such a way that it was easy to access, understand and assimilate.

With each of these relationships, significant investment in time and effort was required. Some foundations were solid and dependable, others less so. These challenges and the successes and disappointments that emerged will be revisited.

4.3.4 Developing awareness of the history of muleteering

My understanding of the various muleteering and mule care practices in evidence within the valley needed to be placed in its relevant historical, cultural and societal contexts. What was the history of mule ownership and muleteering practice in the Toubkal National Park? How had it developed and what had influenced it? These important questions contributed to the development of a more considered understanding of the 'hows and whys' of the practices studied.

Unravelling these histories took time as it was necessary to track down accounts of early expeditions into the area since the turn of the 20th Century. At one point, I was invited to the offices of the Casablanca section of the CAF to present my work. I heard from members of the changes they had witnessed over the years and was granted access to their archives and library, unearthing old copies of the club magazines from the 1950s.

I undertook several treks with older community members to visit mining areas that had previously provided work for the community. In some cases, we retraced the very paths that the mules had followed when taking miners up to the mines in the morning and those then followed when bringing the mineral ore down to the roadhead. These journeys tapped into embodied memories and yielded oral histories. Certain cues along the paths served as prompts and provided windows on a world long gone. The toil,

hopes and aspirations of those who had worked in the mines could be understood relative to the opportunities that replaced them with the disappearance of mining and the appearance of mountain tourism.

Oral histories were also solicited from old guides who had walked every inch of the mountains for the past 60-70 years, first as shepherds or goat herds, then as would-be guides. I visited them at home, sometimes with a guide to help translate and spent hours listening to their reminiscing. This allowed other pieces of information to be better understood, checked, double checked, triple checked even, to triangulate and make sense of the historical context that the mules had become caught up in. In some cases, shoe boxes of old photographs, postcards, notebooks and thank you letters would emerge and these would give rise to storytelling. In other cases, a filing cabinet was opened and a dusty file pulled out with the paperwork collected over a lifetime's guiding.

These discussions, the storytelling that flowed, the memories evoked all fed into a tapestry of understanding. Many of the young guides enjoyed finding out about their culture and were actively coached to help develop their own curiosity. This highlighted the ways in which much traditional knowledge is being dismissed, forgotten and abandoned as the new generations turn their attention to the outside world and all that it has to tempt them with.

4.3.5 Training research staff

My fieldwork called for contributions from translators to help check and double check that meaning was preserved, rather than lost in translation. I was fortunate to be able to call upon several well-educated young guides who I had trained at the CFAMM. Their proficiency in French and English and their guiding experience meant they were familiar with European ideas and well placed to mediate between cultures. Their training in mule welfare also meant they were familiar with many of the welfare concerns this project was investigating and addressing. The involvement of translators meant that interviews and exchanges could be conducted in French, English and Berber, providing ample opportunity for meaning to be confirmed, nuances and misinterpretations corrected, not just in the interviews and review sessions but on the ground, in the immediacy of practice.

An expert in 'natural horsemanship' was employed^{110 111} to provide training for local muleteering teams. This involved training local trainers, developing their ability to 'show and tell'. Ellen was coached in the development of a reviewing approach that emphasised cycles of reflective learning¹¹². This approach used video feedback and open questioning to encourage participants to reflect on what they had done, the emotional responses elicited and results produced when working with a mule. This allowed them to propose explanations for what they were seeing in the video and potential changes and improvements to test out.

Initially, we worked together with two mules and, focussing particularly, on the newly purchased young mule's training. Ellen filmed my interactions with the young mule and we then tried to develop our understanding of what was happening. Ellen had not previously worked with mules and needed to explore how her understanding of horses could be transferred to mules. We therefore discussed what we were seeing in video footage of the young mule's training and proposed explanations and changes that could help develop our awareness and learning. This soon also integrated the contributions of the staff who were working with the mules.

This work developed our awareness of mules and mule behaviour, our powers of observation and of sensing, as well as our own curiosity. Together we saw and sensed things that one or other of us was missing, developing an attunement to the mules we were working with. Mine was born of proximity, Ellen's of close concentrated study and observation. She observed interactions and reported on what she saw both at the time and, afterwards, on video. We soon found that things would be noted on video footage that had escaped our attention. Sometimes, we had to slow video right down to spot something critical. Learning to co-sense together thus heightened our awareness and powers of observation. Ellen was able to propose and discuss various possible explanations for the behaviour seen; she thus developed an ability to capture and

¹¹⁰ Ellen Cochrane is a young woman with a degree in equine science, who has trained as a bitless riding instructor. She prefers to describe her approach to horsemanship as 'progressive' rather than 'natural' due to the ongoing disagreement over what 'natural horsemanship' consists of. (Cochrane, 2017).

¹¹¹ Initially, in November 2014, she came as a volunteer and was hosted by one of the companies I was working with. I then managed to secure funding for her subsequent visits (January-October 2015) from private individuals and The Donkey Sanctuary UK.

¹¹² This drew on my experience of video reviewing in ski coaching and outdoor education (Cousquer, 2009). To my knowledge it has not been developed and analysed as an aid to coaching in human-animal relationships.

explore aspects of mule behaviour and muleteering practice that deepened our awareness.

As we started working with other muleteers we continued to develop, adapt and refine our reviewing approaches. This was possible because review sessions were themselves reviewed with Ellen, helping us to develop a deeper awareness of what worked, did not work and why. In some cases, this meant identifying when a translator was adding something to a question or an answer; in other cases, it meant recognising that participants were struggling to see and understand certain interactions. These insights would, in turn, prompt us both to attempt to look out for and capture the interactions on camera, to then represent them more convincingly to the participants. Our own ability to anticipate mule and muleteer behaviour, interactions, reactions, omissions and misunderstandings thus developed and grew in the field and we were soon able to capture a wide range of material that provided ample material for discussion during the review sessions. These were our U-journeys and there were many.

4.3.6 Reflexivity.

I developed a reflexive approach to field work by constantly questioning what I was doing and why. I journaled about and reflected on my values and motivations and the positionality I was adopting. My thought processes, assessments, judgements, fears, assumptions and emotions were thus laid bare. The feedback I received from people in the field provided a constant check on my understanding of what was going on. Where owners or other people disagreed with the interpretations we proposed, this was welcomed and fed into our dialoguing. The mules' opinions were sought and considered too for they had to be given opportunities to disagree with what was being proposed on their behalf.

The following account describes how I drew on work on psychosocial development, organisational learning, community building and mindfulness to develop my own awareness and that of others in the field. I start by exploring how I developed my ability to see from across the field, in a holistic sense. Seeing from the whole introduces a spiritual quality, a mystical element that must be embodied for it transcends other forms of knowing. Such knowing is not of the 'doing mind', but of the body; I therefore

had to reflect on how I learnt to open my heart and belly, integrating feeling and emotion into my work.

My starting point was a recognition that the industry is a field with limited awareness of itself. I had to seek out the pluralistic and often contradictory views on animal welfare held by the industry, embracing the paradoxical oppositions and contradictions uncovered. It was, I discovered, in the tensions produced by bringing these different views of mule welfare together that the means by which the subject could be better explored and studied were to be found. It was by integrating the views, the lower and higher possibilities of the whole community (men and women, human and nonhuman) that a healthier, wiser, more balanced and considered view of what is right emerges. Such an approach is implicitly holistic. It is, as Scott Peck (1987, p. 234) argues of all genuine communities, "wholistic" and "integrates human beings into a functioning mystical body". The resulting researcher-driven community building and community awareness endeavour established a network that would explore the field and feed the emerging knowledge back into the network. Developing and fostering reflexivity as a community project is an essential part of what Senge and Scharmer (2006, pp. 195-196) describe as community action research. They emphasise the need to create "settings for collective reflection that enable people to see themselves in one another". Multiple cycles of reflection therefore developed both the researcher's and the community's awareness of mule welfare from the field.

Seeing from the whole¹¹³ is ambitious and necessary for it refuses to accept the compartmentalisation that allows matters that are properly related to each other to be held in separate, airtight containers. These containers artificially isolate parts of the whole, preventing them from rubbing up against each other. And, in isolation, there is no awareness, no pain and no responsibility. Taking responsibility therefore demands great integrity for we must integrate the parts rather than holding them apart. We must see ourselves as a part and not apart. Such integrity, however, is never painless:

¹¹³ The whole here is the "authentic whole" that is apprehended by the "intuitive mind" as opposed to the "counterfeit whole" that is the abstraction produced by the "intellectual mind". (Bortoft, 1996; Scharmer, 2011, p. 158)

It requires that we let matters rub up against each other, that we fully experience the tension of conflicting needs, demands and interests, that we even be emotionally torn apart by them. (Peck, 1987, p. 235)

And I was torn apart! I was bruised by my own self-questioning and had to endure and was traumatised by the way the responses of those who felt challenged and threatened by my work. It is well known that the truth hurts and that it often prompts strong responses, including denial and anger in the first instance as it encounters “the strong elements of conservatism based on vested interests and a prevailing viewpoint or myth of how their world should be organised” (Funnell and Parish, 1999, p. 141). Learning to cope with these responses was therefore important. The exposure to inner and outer tensions was something I had to learn to reflect on and manage. The following paragraphs therefore explore these aspects.

In soliciting contributions from across the field, in providing feedback and receiving feedback, in testing out ideas, in soliciting critiques of my work, I found myself learning to doubt and cope with doubt. I came to recognise the need to develop my own awareness of the impact the work had on me emotionally and the potential consequences this might have on data interpretation. By practising mindfulness, I sought to develop this awareness. This allowed me to appreciate where the ideas, thoughts and feelings I was subject to flowed from and to let go of them. According to Senge et al (2005, p. 96), “suspension allows us to be more aware of what our habitual thoughts are, as we simply step back and notice them.” This process of emptying makes room for the new. By learning how to lay aside my own attitudes and behavioural patterns, my own viewpoints, understandings and resentments, I opened myself to hidden opportunities and higher possibilities. This embodiment of change was thus a fundamental step along the untrodden path that I have broken and learned to break. By treading that path, I have equipped myself better to lead and / or accompany others along a similar transformational path. I do not, however, assume that the path is the same one for each journey will be different and I needed to empty myself of expectations and remain alert to these differences.

It is well recognised that those who seek to innovate and promote change are resisted and that this can be hurtful, damaging even. Whether they be prophets or innovators, they fall victim to the defensive mechanisms of society:

Prophets are almost invariably the bearers of bad news. They proclaim that something is wrong with their society. But people don't like to hear bad news about themselves, which is why prophets are so often stoned or otherwise scapegoated. (Peck, 1987, p. 37)

This sentiment is echoed in the description provided by Peter Senge of the way innovators are treated within organisations:

... when the organizational immune system kicks in, innovators often find themselves ignored, ostracized or worse.

This same dynamic is at work even in our own learning. When we're learning something new, we can feel awkward, incompetent, and even foolish. It's easy to convince ourselves that it's really not so important after all to incorporate the new - and so we give up. This is our own psychological "immune system" at work. Living systems' natural "prejudice" against otherness helps explain why suspension can be dangerous. (Senge et al, 2005, p. 35)

I have, at various times throughout this project, suffered from self-doubt and from the disbelief and rejection of many across the industry. I have had to draw on my reserves of inner strength and conviction to see me through. I have been fortunate to have had the support of colleagues who believed in me and a psychotherapist and mindfulness practitioner who supported me throughout this process. The reflexive elements of this thesis do not shrink from recognising and exploring the emotional burden shouldered in undertaking this work. The courage required bears many of the hallmarks of the courage required to see freshly, to co-sense and co-presence:

The capacity to suspend established ways of seeing is essential for all important scientific discoveries. It is also why the discoverers, like innovators in established organizations, often find that their lives become more difficult as a consequence. (Senge et al, 2005, p. 35)

At this point, it was worth saying a few words about the relationship between mindfulness and reflexivity. To be mindfully aware is to develop present moment awareness. "Regardless of the causes, the attachment takes us out of the present moment. Continually letting go keeps bringing us back to the here and now." (Senge et al, 2005, p. 96). This kind of awareness can be developed through mindfulness (Williams and Penman, 2011). By learning to let go of thoughts as they arise, it is possible to return oneself to the present moment and redirect one's attention; it is redirection that "opens up new levels of awareness by moving beyond the subject-object duality that normally separates us from reality." (Senge et al, 2005, p. 96). In my

own case, it was helpful to recognise when my attention was attached to what I was trying to make happen as well as when I was attached to an outcome even though I was not trying to force it to happen¹¹⁴. By learning to recognise these, I was able to let go of them.

The emerging future is one in which the mountain tourism industry has started to take an interest. I recognise my role in sowing the seeds for this transformation and in creating the conditions for these seeds to germinate, grow and thrive. This was my higher purpose. I was aware of the problem, its causes and potential solutions; I could therefore visualise and share the future that was seeking to emerge.

The seeds for this transformation lie in seeing our reality more clearly, without preconceptions and judgements. When we learn to see our part in creating things that we don't like but that are likely to continue, we can begin to develop a different relationship with our "problems". When we move forward from sensing to presencing, we become open to what might be possible, and we're inevitably led to the question "So what do we want to create?" But the "we" in this statement is a larger "we". The visions that arise out of genuine presencing come from the field knowing itself," a spontaneous expression of discovering the power to shape our reality and our responsibility to an emerging future. (Senge et al, 2005, pp. 131-132).

Sensing from the field requires a certain kind of reflexivity, one that sees the field and indeed the World holistically, as a whole, as a community. This way of seeing and of sensing has a spiritual quality (Scharmer, 2009; Peck, 1987). A truly reflexive researcher will therefore develop their scepticism and cultivate the ability to doubt and question but they will also let go, wherever possible, of the rigidity of thinking that prevents them from glimpsing the bigger picture. My own reflexive turns led me to ponder, doubt, question and seek to understand better. Amongst the questions I had to reflect on, several stand out:

- what is my purpose / intention?
- what do I need to let go off?¹¹⁵
- what are the sources of my thoughts and actions?

¹¹⁴ In Buddhist theory, these two 'thought traps' arise as subtle attachments of mind and are called *vitarka* and *vicara*.

¹¹⁵ Typically, the three voices that one must deal with when developing an open mind, open heart and open will are the voices of judgement, cynicism and fear. It is therefore important to be able to recognise and let go of judgments, cynicism and fear when they arise. In doing so, it becomes possible to see more clearly, to sense and to presence.

- how am I to understand and account for my role?
- how am I to make sense of my experiences in the field?
- how am I to account for myself as a sensing organ and as a research tool?
- how can I develop my ability to cope with, adapt and respond to the resistance, adversity and rejection encountered in the field?

The reflexive aspects of this work are ongoing and continue to benefit from mindfulness meditation and psychotherapy. These elements and insights will therefore figure as a narrative thread within the thesis.

4.4 *Methods*

This section provides an outline of the methods developed to explore how actors in mountain tourism attend to the mule and enact welfare. It also explores how spaces are created in which old ways of attending can be suspended and attention redirected.

4.4.1 *Action Inquiry with Mules*

Learning to attend to mules was crucial to my field work: An understanding of mules and of how to 'be' with a mule was essential to open the path to dialogue. To co-sense, co-presence and co-create with a mule required the development of an attunement in which both parties were able to contribute. Learning to attend became possible when an opportunity presented itself to immerse myself in the company of a young mule that had been purchased by the company hosting me and with whom I was working in 2014. My intention was to train the mule but in truth it was the mule who trained me. I was helped by Ellen who was available to me as a sounding board and coach. The three of us therefore learnt and grew together. Intuitively¹¹⁶.

Why intuitively? Preserving the primacy of the experiential encounter meant eschewing theory, old ways of thinking and the frameworks they impose to better learn from this mule and from the field. I did not want to assume anything. I wanted to suspend judgement and listen to what the mule was telling me and to what my intuitions were telling me. I wanted to develop my ability to sense and co-sense. I was

¹¹⁶ Much has been written about 'horse whispering' (Roberts, 1996) and horse training (Marks, 2002; McGreevy and McLean, 2007; McGreevy, Oddie, Burton and McLean, 2009). I however, have deliberately not referred to any of this literature in developing an understanding of the mule.

also conscious that those working with mules in the High Atlas would not have access to large bodies of theoretical knowledge, and conscious too that anything I was to teach would have to be very simple and therefore very accessible.

We therefore went back to basics, working as intuitively as possible. Our approach was based on an exploration of comfort zones, mapping and then expanding them through challenge as is widely practised in outdoor and experiential education (Brown, 2008; Priest and Gass, 1997) and in coaching (McLeod, 2010). These approaches are particularly valuable when operating across cultural boundaries to deliver conflict resolution and understanding within multicultural teams (Videnová, Beluský, Cagáňová and Čambál, 2012). The teams we were working with are both multicultural and multispecies, demanding a similarly open communicative approach.

When applied to the mule, this approach allows the human member of the dyad to develop an instinctive awareness of when the mule is comfortable and when the mule is uncertain and / or being challenged. This recognition allows the appropriate level of support, safety and reassurance to be provided. In essence, it allows the switch from green to orange to be sensed, allowing a controlled return to green to be made when necessary (Figure 4.10).

This approach utilises and builds on what (McGreevy and McLean, 2007, pp. 108-109) refer to as the equine's 'capacity for habituation'. It is not, however, an approach built on theory, so much as an approach built on sensing and awareness. It therefore explores how the human-mule dyad can learn to co-sense, co-exist and communicate. And it does so by paying close attention to the emotional state of self and other, man and mule. This is an 'in-the-moment' feeling; it is intuitive and does not require us to reach for theories and explanations, especially if these get in the way of sensing by introducing judgements, cynicism or fear. For true sensing to take place, these must be suspended.



Figure 4.10: Shaping theory and practice: Operating from within the comfort zone (green central area), an awareness of when the mule is being stretched allows excursions into the stretch (or learning zone) to be carefully managed so that the mule is never overstretched.

Failure to recognise this can lead to the mule experiencing panic. The development of a heightened awareness of the mule's emotional state ensures that the handler remains associated with safety and comfort. This positive association forms the basis of trust and ensures that relationships are founded on trust, understanding and good communication. It also allows the handler to develop their ability to anticipate when one is entering a transitional zone.

Attending to the mule requires us to suspend our thinking, our theories, our conditioning, our ideas and emotions. We need to let go of self and learn to commune. We are then better able to attune ourselves to their preferences and better able to present choices in ways that are acceptable. In this sense, there is an ethological commitment to respect their behavioural needs, preferences, values and motivations whilst recognising that the world view of any creature can be constructed, influenced, configured and indeed reconfigured. In this way, the mule grows (Figure 4.11) and we grow with them. Learning to co-see, to co-sense, co-presence and co-create with the mule requires us to see the other, not as an object, but as an extension of ourselves and ourselves as an extension of the other (Figure 4.12).

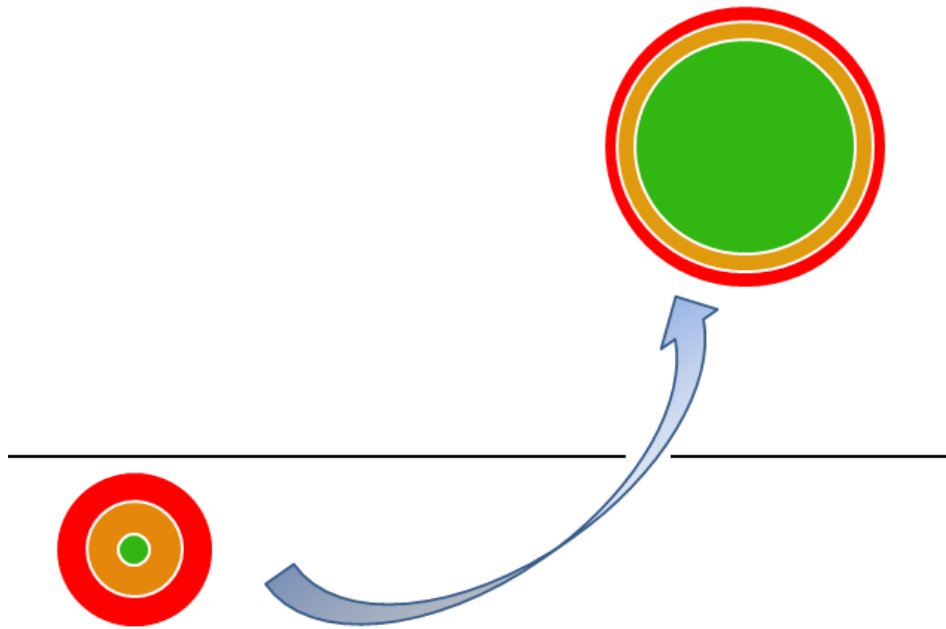


Figure 4.11: The mule's habituation can be encouraged and promoted so that they become well-adjusted, well-socialised individuals. This is about growing and flourishing as well-adapted individuals; it means growing the comfort zone (green). It is not about imposing a situation and breaking the mule as this gives rise to a situation of learned helplessness in which love, trust and understanding are absent. Flourishing requires something quite different, it elevates the spirit rather than crushing it.

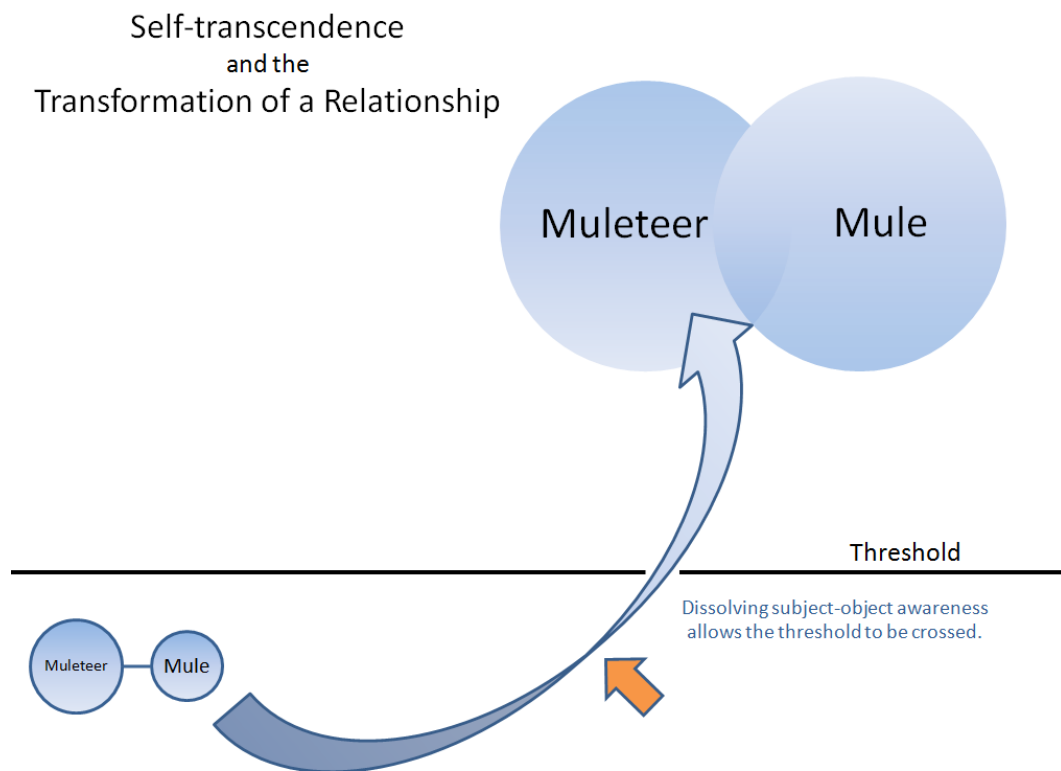


Figure 4.12: The tendency for the muleteer to view and treat the mule as an object rather than as an extension of himself has come to define the relationships that exist between man and mule. Transforming the self and the relationship requires us to see ourselves in the other. It is this that allows us to transcend and dissolve subject-object awareness and attain a new, higher level of awareness.

This is significant because the mule can become a participant as we learn to open the organ within us that is of the mule and speaks for the mule. Awareness of this inner organ requires that we pay careful attention to the inner arc of attention (Marshall, 2006, p. 335), developing our ability to notice our intentions, our perceiving and making meaning in different situations. This learning is ongoing and should respond to the uniqueness and specificity of situations. As such, it is important to emphasise that I did not always inquire well and skilfully; mistakes were made but were always rich grounds for learning.

4.4.2 Action Inquiry with Muleteers

The journeys I have undertaken with muleteers since 2009 allowed me to observe and explore aspects of muleteering practice (Figures 4.13a-4.13b). Accompanying muleteers and their mules provided opportunities to walk and talk together. This was more relaxed, allowing aspects of muleteering practice to emerge during the journey. The relative lack of embodiment, together with the seemingly impossible step of bringing the mule in, loomed large as a problem, however. The mules involved were the property of the owner and it was not possible to work them myself and explore alternative possibilities; only those that the owner enacted with their mule were therefore available to study. Glimpses of alternatives were possible when the mules were engaged by me but these opportunities were limited to a specific and rather limited set of interactions: the clinical examination (Figure 4.14a), feeding, observation at rest.

Treks undertaken with trekking groups highlighted the lack of contact between muleteers and tourists, the fact that they travel separately and rarely converse. Opportunities for observation and detailed questioning were therefore limited. This was further compounded by the challenges of studying in an embodied sense, a muleteer's practice. Even for me, muleteers would often have limited time for deep questioning, introspection and discussion. They would have to rush off to visit friends, chase girls or undertake other activities that made them unavailable. This was particularly the case when staying in villages. The best discussions were often those at quiet campsites or other isolated places. The number of evenings on a trek when one could undertake reviews and discuss practice (Figure 4.14b) were therefore limited.



Figures 4.13a-4.13b: A research colleague and I observe a mule and muleteer (arrow) from behind. There is limited interaction and the observations recorded then have to be explored by interviewing on the move (below). It took over eighteen months for a deep and meaningful relationship to become established with this muleteer and his practice examined from within, on training treks.





Figure 4.14a: Co-seeing opportunities: Owners were fascinated to see inside their mules' mouths and understand the damage caused by the traditional bit and the dental problems caused by an inappropriate diet. Such opportunities to engage them and help the to exercise their curiosity were, however, rare.



Figure 4.14b: The muleteers on a ten-day trek undertaken in August 2014 gather round the table to study and discuss a series of images from the trek and others that illustrated the many welfare problems identified during the survey work.

Then there was also the fact that many questions could not be asked at a rational logical level. Meaningful questions about muleteering practice and about the tacit knowledge that underpins it are only possible when deep diving¹¹⁷ into the practice as co-practitioners. This ultimately leads to a deeper understanding of the choices faced by a mule owner when having to purchase, feed, care for and work his mule.

Real communities of learning capable of studying and evolving muleteering practice only became possible when the work undertaken with EPA members highlighted the need to undertake training for their muleteering teams on the ground. These communities were not pseudocommunities¹¹⁸ but committed teams with whom it was possible to strive for transcendental knowledge as we worked together to study and evolve muleteering practice. This reformulation of the working relationship from one of observing and questioning to one of sharing, co-sensing and co-presencing was significant. As Senge and Scharmer point out:

Researchers there to 'study' what is going on are rarely seen as providing much help, so people are not likely to share with them the most important and problematic aspects of what is happening. Connecting practitioner's knowledge, much of which is tacit, to developing theory and method requires a genuine sense of partnership between researcher and practitioner based on mutual understanding and on embracing each other's' goals and needs. This rarely occurs in academic research. (2006, p. 199)

The creation of training programmes in which I could start taking small teams of muleteers away for training treks and explore their practices through a series of reflective learning cycles was instituted in June 2015 and ran through the summer and autumn. In total, 34 muleteers benefited from this training, several individuals were regular members of training teams and four individuals were trained as 'mule welfare champions'. I accompanied these muleteering teams on multi-day treks and shared with them different ways of working with mules, whilst they in turn shared with me their knowledge and understanding, together with the constraints and challenges that they were struggling to transcend. This transformed relationships: The muleteers

¹¹⁷ "Deep diving into the field of sensing and co-sensing means total immersion in the particulars of the field. ... It is living in the full experience of that world and becoming one with it (Scharmer, 2011).

¹¹⁸ According to Peck (1987, pp. 86-106) a pseudocommunity is the first of four steps to community making. The four stages, in order are pseudocommunity, chaos, emptiness and community. Peck compares the achievement of community to the reaching of a mountain top and suggests that community is a group that has learned to transcend its individual differences. In order for this to happen, differences must be appreciated and celebrated rather than being ignored, denied, hidden or changed.

enjoyed sharing and appreciated that I was working to improve their lives and those of their mules. Additionally, they were being paid to be with me and to undergo training that specifically integrated critical reflection on their practice(s). This rendered it easier to spend extended periods of time with them and meant teams could be brought together for discussions where before this had been hit and miss¹¹⁹.

Working with muleteering teams carved out time and space for aspects of their muleteering practice to be studied and discussed. Each team was made up of six muleteers and their mules. This meant that six different muleteer-mule dyads could be placed under the magnifying glass together and a wealth of comparative questions explored. The relationship of each muleteer with their mule became visible as did all manner of choices made. These were captured either as still photographs or on video, or both (Figures 4.15a-4.15b). A slideshow and edited video was prepared each evening, serving as a prompt for discussions. These were semi-structured or unstructured, depending on what had emerged during the day and what warranted further exploration.

Working together meant sharing knowledge, concerns and ideas. It meant considering what improvements could be made and what barriers to change existed and needed to be addressed. It meant exploring what was feasible and opening minds, hearts and wills to the possibility of change. Those involved were taken through a series of learning cycles with new insights, knowledge and understanding being applied straight away. Sometimes this meant trying something new after taking a five-minute break and having a discussion, in others it meant trying out an adaptation to a technique after lunch or on the next day of a trek (Figures 4.16a-4.16b).

¹¹⁹ In some cases, I might have initiated a piece of work with a particular owner and then found that they were away working or otherwise unavailable when I went back to find them! On one occasion the apple harvest supposedly got in the way of a pre-arranged training trek. The exact reasons for the cancellation could not be ascertained. It did, however, provide me with the opportunity to explore what not travelling with the muleteers and working together might be about, what the competing calls on their time might be and how they and the ground handler they worked for viewed training. A discussion with a senior figure in the UK expeditions company for whom the training had been arranged, led to a phone call that impressed on the ground handler how important animal welfare was to that company and how important it was that the training go ahead. The ground handler was reminded of the circumstances under which they had been awarded the service contract and that it could just as easily be awarded to somebody else. Not surprisingly, the muleteers suddenly became available and the training went ahead.



Figures 4.15a-4.15b: On the descent from Tizi Mzik, Ellen (red arrow, above) spots something of interest - or anticipates it - and starts filming (below). The capturing of material on such training treks generated material for the evening review sessions.





Figures 4.16a-4.16b: Ellen conducts a short review of the manner in which the young mule was approached and caught after the lunch stop. This makes use of a short piece of video shown on the laptop and allows a quick experiment to be undertaken using food and a food bowl to positively reinforce the approach of the handler.



Reviewing recognised the need to be adaptable and to work out when to undertake a review in relation to the activity¹²⁰. Short reviews conducted during the day, for example, allowed aspects of practice to be fine-tuned. This involved suggesting small changes or setting up exercises that allowed the muleteer and his mule to experiment with a different technique. In some cases, it was decided to engineer an activity that would allow a specific area of practice to be explored. By having all members of the team execute the same difficult descent, for example, video footage was produced that allowed choices and technique to be captured on film and then reviewed and compared. Added levels of complexity were introduced by having people work a mule that was not their own.

4.4.3. Action Inquiry with Agencies

In November 2014, Chris Short organised a workshop for EPA members. It was attended by representatives of the four big companies¹²¹ who all have expeditions activities in Africa that make use of pack animals¹²². I was invited to deliver a presentation on the key welfare problems that mules working in the High Atlas are subject to. A breakout session was then facilitated looking at how an EPA pack animal welfare initiative could build on the existing Donkey Sanctuary Leader checklist¹²³. Key objectives and obstacles were identified.

Three key areas¹²⁴ were emphasised as priorities, namely:

- Overloading
- Tethering and harness related problems¹²⁵
- Handling / communication and biting related problems

¹²⁰ These approaches drew on the researcher's experience in outdoor education and in teaching reviewing to guide students at the CFAMM.

¹²¹ Camps International, FFE, Outlook Expeditions and World Challenge.

¹²² Together with Shane Winsor, of the RGS and representatives from The Donkey Sanctuary UK.

¹²³ First published in 2011 (see Cousquer, 2011a). Republished in The Veterinary Times in 2012 (Cousquer, 2012).

¹²⁴ These were the principle areas that the researcher's work between 2009 and 2014 and the additional survey work conducted locally in early 2014 had identified as concerns.

¹²⁵ Tethering has historically been a problem in Morocco. Cunninghame Graham (1898, p. 108) writes that "The Arabs in Morocco though fond of horses treat them roughly and foolishly ... their feet they allow to grow too long, their legs they spoil by too tight hobbling."

A two-day conference and workshop in Morocco was then organised in March 2015, bringing together the ground handlers for these and other interested companies, together with muleteers from across the valley¹²⁶. This was the first-time people from across the mountain tourism community had ever met to discuss mule welfare problems, their causes and potential solutions and alternatives (Figures 4.17a-b). Attendees were thus attending to mule welfare. Further opportunities to understand how they attended and could attend better emerged as companies had their teams audited and trained.

Detailed reports were supplied following these interventions, developing agency awareness further and feeding the development and implementation of company animal welfare policies. Reporting took several forms: Welfare audits were undertaken on the regular muleteers and mules working for each company. This meant bringing these individuals together and conducting a detailed audit that could be recorded and translated into visual¹²⁷ reports that could be sent electronically, typically, to an office overseas. In addition to mule welfare audits, detailed training reports were produced following each training trek. These highlighted the progress made and the difficulties encountered. Both the audits and training reports concluded with specific recommendations (action points) for each mule and muleteer and the agency.

¹²⁶ This was unprecedented as these organisations had never before shared details of their ground handlers or brought them together to discuss an issue of wider concern to the whole industry.

¹²⁷ All issues were clearly documented and evidenced using still photos to help office staff in Europe see and appreciate what problems were identified.



Figure 4.17a: The class room sessions at the EPA workshop, in Imlil, allowed key welfare problems to be presented. This then fed into dialoguing sessions in which potential solutions were explored.



Figure 4.17b: Practical sessions involving Bella and other mules allowed aspects of mule behaviour, handling and mule-human communication to be demonstrated and discussed. This was the first time that mules, muleteers and agencies had come together to learn and talk about mule welfare.

In this way, companies were helped to develop awareness of the guidelines and the challenges involved in translating them into policy and practice (Figure 4.18). This then fed directly into staff training and development. As these aspects of the cycle are further developed and progressed, regular reviewing is required to fine tune the system (Cousquer, 2016b).

The co-creation of EPA guidance notes, company policies, leader checklists and reporting systems¹²⁸ and other materials together with the co-delivery of training courses with staff from different EPA companies provided opportunities for action inquiry with the agencies throughout 2016 and into 2017.

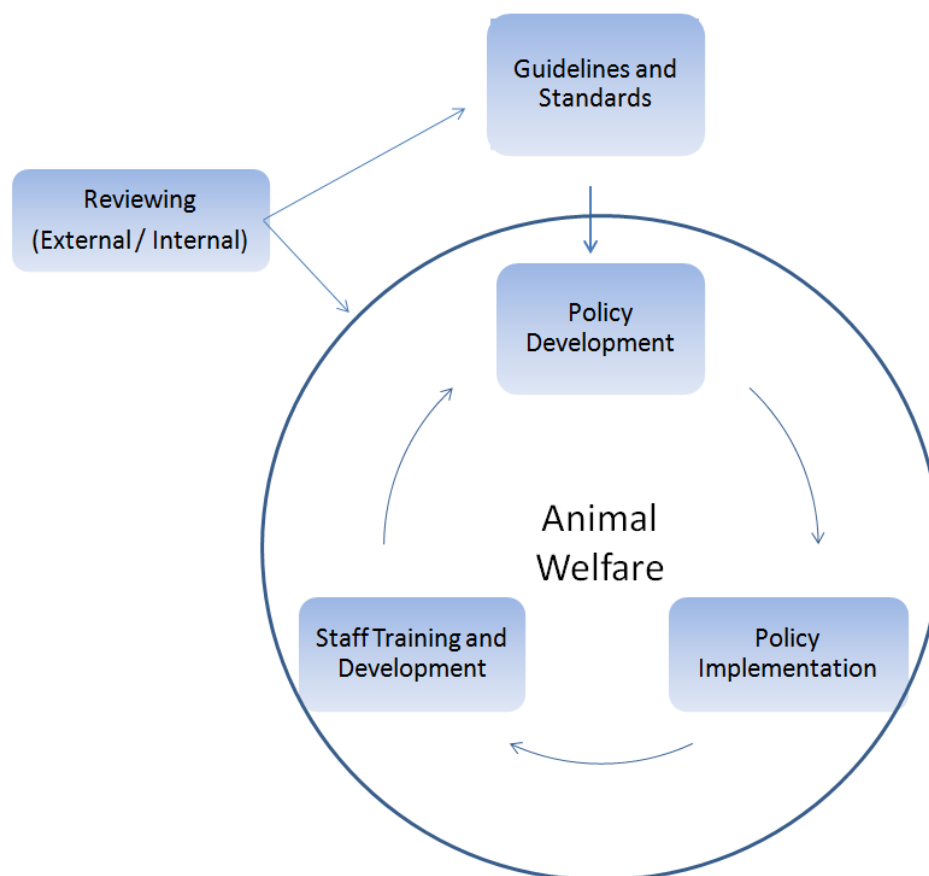


Figure 4.18: Developing in-house policies on aspects of sustainable and responsible tourism often refers to external guidelines or standards to inform policies. The implementation of these policies requires a clear strategy that takes into account the need for equipment and staff training.

¹²⁸ Expedition leaders working for EPA member companies typically submit a post expedition report (PXR).

4.5 *Data collection and analysis*

4.5.1 *Field Notes*

Journaling is part of a mindful approach to action research (Marshall, 2006; Scharmer, 2011) and life (Proctor and Wilson, 2008). It allows us to be present, to capture experiences, thoughts, images, observations, feelings, doubts, contradictions and confirmations. It is impossible to capture every detail but some form and degree of capture is required to allow the things that our curiosity and awareness shines a light on to be documented for later analysis.

I have journaled for over twenty years and have developed ways of capturing my thoughts, feelings and attentions through learning to pay attention to them. I cannot say what I attach significance to as this changes with time and varies moment by moment. What is worth recording one minute is replaced by something else the next. This, therefore, was my starting point coming into the field. Over time, my daily journaling helped me reflect on how I was attending and how I could attend differently.

Initially, I did not know what to pay attention to, what to disregard, what to look out for. I therefore learned to sense this intuitively. This can feel strange and uncertain but is entirely necessary when one is leading from an emergent future, rather than from the past. I had to learn to "purposefully refine my capacity for paying attention, ultimately to anything and everything that might be relevant to navigating the world with open eyes and hearts" (Jon Kabat-Zinn, quoted in Senge et al, 2005, p. 50).

One has to sense the feeling, feel drawn to something and, moving into that space, one then crystallizes "what emerges from there, prototyping the new and delivering it into reality" (Scharmer, 2009, p. 208). At the time, I did not know that I was prototyping and that this involved a mindful exploration of future possibilities.

Indeed, the true nature of an emerging whole can't be accessed fully without engaging in concrete experiments, improvisation and prototyping. What we begin to intuit starts to become clear and real for us in a totally new way once we consciously endeavour to make it manifest and stay open to the feedback that effort elicits. (Senge et al, 2005, pp. 146-147)

At the end of a day in the field, I would have a host of materials to draw upon when writing my notes. I would typically have some hand-written notes (key points¹²⁹ or phrases) scribbled down on the hillside, together with a collection of photographs, sometimes as many as 100, which served as prompts for my note writing. I might have a few recordings from snatched interviews that would remind me of what was discussed. I would also have the product of a series of review sessions. These were all drawn on in writing up field notes. This process would, in turn, provide feedback on my evolving ideas of how to develop the prototypes of high welfare practice that were emerging. If days in the field were long, the notes would be written up in a shortened version with key headings and points captured and would be reworked a few days later.

An ever-constant voice in my field notes was the inner questioning voice that drove me on to test, retest and justify what I was doing. It was this voice that constantly urged me to crystallise the fundamental purpose of my work, the powerful vision that informed my intention. This inner voice allows us to inquire from within and become more aware of our thoughts and intentions as we interact with the World. In this sense, it is what Judi Marshall describes as an "inner arc of attention" (2006, p. 335), an arc that operates simultaneously with the 'outer arc of attention that is deployed when we reach outside ourselves in some way.

4.5.2 Photography and Video

Photography and video played an essential role in developing awareness of mule welfare issues. Images speak. Images travel. Images tell stories. As forms of presentational knowledge, they are inchoate, full of potential and able to bring a quality of curiosity to the inquiry (Heron and Reason, 2008; Yorks and Kasl, 2002). According to Larsen (2006, p. 241), tourism and photography conspire together to produce "a profound multiplication of images and sights" and "an unprecedented geographical extension of the field of the visible" and "of the tourist gaze" (p. 244)¹³⁰. Our ability to seek out, to look and to see and, perhaps most importantly, our ability to choose (or refuse to choose) to see can transform our realities¹³¹. Our "ways of seeing" (Berger,

¹²⁹ These often became subheadings in my field notes.

¹³⁰ See also Larsen (2004) and Urry (2002).

¹³¹ John Ruskin claimed that "the greatest thing a human soul ever does in the World is to see something. ... To see clearly is poetry, prophecy and religion." In Hibbitts (1994, p. 257).

1972) are, however, learned, socially patterned and constructed but also constructed, for the tourism industry is able to direct our attention away from that which they would prefer tourists not to see. There is therefore a “Tourist Anti- Gaze”, just as much as there is a Tourist Gaze. This Anti-Gaze is a form of ‘absencing’ (Scharmer, 2011, pp. 247-8) that blinds us and must be overcome if minds are to be opened¹³².

Photography’s ability to “bring new cultural worlds into being and focus attention on issues that might otherwise remain in the background” (Acott and Urquhart, 2015, p. 44) is well recognised. Indeed, the very act of taking a picture is a process that can bring “new worlds into existence as old tropes are challenged and new narratives ... told. (p. 45).

Photography allows us to capture a moment and revisit it, affording us an opportunity to look and see afresh. It provides opportunities to suspend our judgements and redirect our attention to that which the photographer and guide has captured by slowing down¹³³ and venturing (with the camera) into new places. As such, photography opens the mind and can open the heart. Photography does not therefore simply produce data, it facilitates the research by mediating between researcher, mule and others. In my case, it provided opportunities for what has been described as photo-elicitation (Harper, 2002; Kerstetter and Bricker, 2009), serving as the starting point for individual and group discussions. Photographs and video were selected by Ellen and I in preparing for the review sessions. This form of photo-elicitation allows the researcher to direct conversation and introduce ideas and perspectives (Acott and Urquhart, 2015, p. 53) that the interviewees were unfamiliar with.

I travelled everywhere with my SLR and video cameras, developing my ability to see as I went. When without my camera, I used my phone. My ability to anticipate moments and capture them on film thus grew as my awareness of the field grew. Much of the videoing was conducted by Ellen Cochrane, who edited the videos afterwards to provide us with short films that captured key welfare issues for reviewing.

¹³²The cycle of absencing is made up of “not seeing, desensing, absencing, illusionizing, aborting and destroying.” (Scharmer, 2011, p. 247). This makes up the social space of anti-emergence which evolves in a dialectical relationship with the social space of emergence.

¹³³“The importance of the camera to slow the researcher down so that care and attention to detail are considered should not be underestimated”. (Acott and Urquhart, 2015, p. 57)

The staff at a local hotel were encouraged to make their own videos for the Kasbah Mule Facebook page¹³⁴. They were interviewed in Berber by an English-speaking local member of staff, who could translate things back into English. The staff helped with the editing and preparation of these educational videos. In this way, welfare issues were explored in depth with as much engagement of local people as possible. The videos would then go out onto the page where they were available to locals and foreigners alike.

I recognise that my use of photography to develop new narratives and shape new futures represents a blurring and blending of research and creative outputs. Smith (2014, p. 4) argues that “much art is about the experience of the moment, whereas most research is about recording or analysing something after an event”. It is my contention that action research for change is implicitly creative and future orientated and that photography can serve as an educational tool that can “raise awareness, ... leading to stewardship and a deeper understanding” (Acott and Urquhart, 2015, p. 60).

4.5.3 Reviewing

Review sessions undertaken on training treks were recorded so that they could be listened to during the writing of field notes and transcribed where appropriate. This allowed key debates and discussions to be revisited to see if meanings had been understood. Meanings, however, would be evaluated over several days to establish that there was no misinterpretation or misunderstanding.

4.5.4 Interviews

Opportunities arose during fieldwork to conduct interviews with key people in the local community and mountain tourism industry. Interviews were generally semi-structured, allowing various external prompts to direct the interview, informed by my curiosity and the few starting questions I might have in mind. A visit to a mule's stable could inspire conversation just as much as the retracing of the now disappeared path taken to the mines that dot the hillside above the villages.

¹³⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/KasbahMules>

Several village elders who had lived through the early years of tourism development in the High Atlas were interviewed. In such cases, a box of letters from satisfied clients, photos, postcards and other memorabilia or other visual prompts were often helpful in structuring the conversations.

Interviews were also conducted with people whilst out trekking. Here a mindful awareness of place and of movement brought forth rich detail from the memories of those involved. On other occasions, officials working for the CAF or the Toubkal National Park were interviewed in their offices. Other interviews took place with local guides and muleteers at appropriate moments. In some cases, it was appropriate to record these interviews for later transcription. In most cases, however, the interviews were captured in note form immediately after the interview had concluded.

4.5.4 Data Analysis

Analysing the development of awareness that emerged as participants learnt to attend to the mule and her welfare requires us to capture growing awareness of the mule's story and how it, in turn, disrupts the stories and realities of the mountain tourism community. This account of the data analysis outlines how these stories were captured.

My immersion in the field has been a prolonged struggle to understand how welfare is enacted and negotiated within that field. Data analysis was, in this sense, ongoing and made use of fast feedback cycles to test and explore understanding. This involved applying an emergent learning cycle (Senge and Scharmer, 2006, p. 203) that privileges four steps:

- a. Observe, observe, observe.
- b. Become still, recognize the emptiness of ideas about past or future.
- c. Allow inner knowing to emerge (presencing).
- d. Act in an instant and observe again.

The first step involved sitting with welfare-in-the-field, contemplating it from all angles, striving to see it as a whole for "such systems can't be analysed from the outside to get at the root cause of things - you have to see them from within " (Senge et al, 2005, p. 54).

I sensed, early on, that the mule was treated as an object and was all-too-easily ignored and rendered invisible. This resulted in welfare problems, including tethering,

overloading, saddle sores and the physical and mental trauma associated with biting. Prototyping alternatives and initiatives that addressed these issues opened opportunities to explore how the relationship between the mule and the mule handler might be transformed and how different members of the community constructed narratives.

Analysis started by reviewing the range of initiatives attempted and trying to sense and crystallize a way to break free from technical solutions. This was an emergent process that involved developing a deep awareness of the biologic, dynamic, social and emergent complexity (Scharmer, 2009, pp. 59-61) of the field and listening attentively to the feedback provided by muleteers, ground handlers, agencies, animal welfare charities, tourists and others. As an emergent process, it also meant listening to what wanted to be brought forth through me. This attentive listening meant that data was constantly being processed to identify what opportunities were worth pursuing.

Since withdrawing from the field site in Morocco, the field notes have been uploaded to Nvivo to allow coding to be undertaken to better understand how a deeper awareness of mule welfare and of the relationship between man and mule emerged.

In analysing the development of awareness in this manner, I have chosen to focus on

- The traditional bit as a means of control and communication with the mule and alternative headwear and communication methods.
- The quality of attending shown by participants.
- The shift from a cycle of absencing to one of presencing.
- My own practice as a guide.

The selection of significant findings to help explore and better understand this phenomenon acknowledges the various ways in which participants have experienced and responded to the “call to adventure” (Campbell, 2008). The discussion of the journeys undertaken will therefore acknowledge the piecemeal, non-linear dawning and development of awareness and the choices that allow actors to shift from a cycle of absencing to one of presencing (Figure 4.5).

Drawing on Scharmer's Theory U to crystallize the emergent future leaves us with the following focus for the narratives that follow: How did awareness of mule welfare and

of the fundamental importance of the relationship between mule and human develop and evolve across the entire supply chain?¹³⁵ How did awareness of the welfare issues associated with the traditional bit emerge and how did the industry's awareness of alternative ways of rethinking the issue develop? How did they come to see with fresh eyes and an open mind? How did participants become aware of their role in the services supply chain and their role as a contributor to (and causative factor of) poor welfare? How did they then make the leap to searching for alternative solutions, a search that involves prototyping alternative visions of the future to address the current poor welfare state and move it towards the highest future possible state?

4.6 *Ethics and Consent*

Cloke et al (2004, p. 375) argue that human geographers are engaged in a discipline “founded on investigations of social and spatial inequality” and on “uncovering and exploring division, difference and uneven development”. They further argue that a moral human geography should not limit itself to mapping our inhumanity but involves a “commitment to securing a more equal and just society”. Action researchers are similarly engaged “in a form of morally committed action”; failure to thoughtfully examine the ethical implications of research can, however, result in a failure to align our actions with our belief in social justice (Brydon-Miller, 2008, pp. 199-200). Extending this commitment to non-humans presents significant ethical challenges for they often lie beyond the “frontiers of justice” (Nussbaum, 2006) and outside both moral and democratic communities (Hursthouse, 2000; pp. 102-104; Scruton, 1996, p. 17). This ‘no-man’s land’ is further complicated by the inter-relationships and interactions of multiple stakeholders with competing interests and moral convictions. The status of the non-human is thus contested and uncertain but, I argue, this is a product of our reluctance to listen to and dialogue with the non-human on the one hand, but also with each other. Developing awareness of and facilitating the renegotiation of the status (and welfare) of the mule within the mountain tourism industry thus presented many ethical dilemmas. This section outlines how these challenges were considered and addressed in line with the principles of respect for persons, beneficence and justice.

¹³⁵ Spanning the journeys of self, self and mule, self and trekking agencies, self and tourist.

Respect for the autonomy of persons is generally considered to be addressed through the informed consent process. This is an example of an institutional principle of research that translates poorly from the Global North to the Global South, where issues of literacy and equality are more problematic (Sultana 2007). It was recognised from the start that informed consent was problematic at several levels: Informing those involved about the purpose of the research could only be summarised as ‘advancing mule welfare’. To explain this further, to prescribe an endpoint was not possible and could have been problematic¹³⁶. I had to content myself with guiding the process, facilitating people’s engagement with the issue as they developed a critical awareness of mules, of mule welfare and of the values and principles provided by charters of care, standards and guidance notes on the subject. I also recognised that the concept of informed consent is very different in a country where authorities, paperwork and forms are mistrusted and, in an area where distrust of the outsider is ingrained (Venema and Mguild, 2003). The muleteers are almost all Berbers and speak an oral language that is not written. They learn foreign languages by ear, are to varying degrees illiterate and struggle to read any written material. The extensive nature of the ethnographic work undertaken also made it inappropriate for written consent to be sought from local participants. It was therefore important that the research respected their interests. Questions arise, however, over the ethics of anonymising participants for, whilst this serves a need for litigation protection, it also restricts participant agency (De Palma, 2010). It was decided that the anonymity of respondents would be preserved unless they specifically consent to being quoted.

The respect of interests is also problematic where it assumes a focus on individual good rather than on democratic / collaborative / community benefit. The exploited whose voices might challenge existing systems of power and privilege can neither give informed consent¹³⁷ nor contribute democratically¹³⁸ to existing systems of dialogue

¹³⁶ De Palma (2010, p. 219) for example refers to concerns over the risks associated with providing informed consent that emerged during her research on homophobia. She emphasises “the need to provide a space where the silenced could speak and be heard” her concerns that these marginalized voices might be heard as shouts and unreasonable rants when they first break the silence (DePalma and Atkinson, 2009)”.

¹³⁷ This may arise because of a limited understanding of the multiple contexts in which mule welfare is enacted.

¹³⁸ This may be because they have little or no opportunity to express their opinions through exclusion from meetings and training programmes. It may also be because they are fearful of voicing their concerns

that crystallise intentions and objectives consistent with the greater good (Scharmer, 2009, pp. 191-202). The notion of justice, however, guarantees equal participation; I therefore argue here that this requires the action researcher bring in the muleteer and the mule as participants so that their voices are heard. Promoting dialogue between community members whose world views are so very different (incompatible even) requires us to acknowledge and deal with the uneven distribution of power and privilege and the many areas of conflict that can arise, “whilst remaining grounded in our own personal and cultural values” (Brydon-Miller, 2008, p. 206). It is therefore essential that the researcher subject themselves to an ongoing critical examination using a first-person action research approach (Chandler and Reason, 2003). This process promotes an awareness of our value systems, multiple identities, power and privilege and the many ways in which these influence our research practices and our interactions with others. Brydon-Miller (2008, p. 205) argues that we need to set aside the time and attention needed to constantly re-examine our values and to “confront contradictions in our ways of understanding the world.” It is through open and honest processes such as journaling that we are able to become “morally grounded and confident in our actions”. Such centring is essential if we are to conduct ourselves beneficently; in the field this implies a shift away from “the strict codes of institutional paperwork towards moral and mutual relations with a commitment to conducting ethical and respectful research that minimises harm” (Sultana, 2007, pp. 376-377). Gibson-Graham (1994, p. 206) are resistant, however, to the idea of “a centred and knowing self that can be present to herself and spoken for”. Scharmer (2009, pp. 206-7 and 401-7), however, argues that intentional silence and meditative practices allow a connection with ‘source’ or ‘deeper intention’ to be established. This goes beyond self-reflection and is about mindfulness.

What then does ethical research look like when one is actively trying to understand, critique and change the systems that directly or indirectly contribute to animal exploitation and suffering? Campbell (2003)’s critique of the Summertown project that brought together “multiple stakeholder groups with very different levels of power and privilege” (Brydon-Miller, 2008, p. 207) to address HIV/AIDS prevention among sex

or because their contributions are too easily ignored by those whose economic or social capital allows them to dismiss unsettling narratives.

workers in a South African mining community highlights the challenges involved in addressing a complex issue affecting a community whose primary concern is survival. Campbell juxtaposes these concerns and intentions with those of the altruistic project managers on the one hand and those of the mine owners and government officials who profit from this oppression. I am similarly reminded that my own intervention sought to promote improved welfare within a peasant community whose conservatism “scarcely defends any privilege” (Berger, 1978, p. 11)¹³⁹ and who did not share the concerns I shared with the mules. I was furthermore, acutely aware that the power and privilege that agencies have over muleteers, and muleteers over their mules, maintains a particular status quo within the field of power and is unlikely to welcome criticism.

The notion of beneficence demands that research address significant social issues as these are defined by the members of communities themselves but this is problematic when the welfare of a marginalised and voiceless member is concerned, especially if the status of the mule as a member of the moral community is disputed¹⁴⁰. I chose to facilitate co-seeing and co-sensing journeys to help other members of the community develop their awareness of their complicity in the mule’s exploitation and resulting poor welfare. This can give rise to feelings of guilt, shame, fear and anger; this discomfort leads in turn to a need to self-protect. I argue here that my ethical responsibility was to deliver environments and encounters that promoted curiosity rather than defensiveness, thereby allowing alternative visions of the future to be explored.

Justice, power and privilege

I recognise that my own privileged position as an ‘authority’ on mule welfare, allied to the access I was granted to several companies’ operations meant that I could assess and report on the poor welfare mules were subjected to when working for some of these companies. The responsibility of auditing and reporting back my findings lay heavy on my shoulders. I used a standardised assessment that captured the key aspects of welfare and felt duty-bound to report clearly and accurately what I observed and make recommendations as to what should be done. My desire to advocate for the mule,

¹³⁹ Berger goes on to say that it is a conservatism “not of power, but of meaning ... of meaning preserved from lives and generations, threatened by continual and inexorable change.” (1978, p. 11).

¹⁴⁰ I have argued elsewhere that the mule is a key member of the trekking team and is therefore more readily viewed as a community member (Cousquer and Allison, 2012).

however, meant that I was naturally disposed to criticise the mule's oppressors (the owners and agencies) and then beat myself up over whether I was being fair to them. Was I all-seeing? Rose (1997, pp. 305-306) states that she could not consider herself to be an all-seeing, all-knowing researcher but found it equally impossible to situate herself and her interpretations by reflexively examining her positionality. This tortuous question continues to perplex me. It is an implicitly ethical question, one I address honestly when trying to explain how I have attempted to develop an account of the multiplicity of practices that co-enact mule welfare or fail to do so. How do I criticise fairly? How do I explain why the industry has historically failed to take responsibility for mules whilst acknowledging the tensions and contradictions of local context? Any answer to these questions requires me to consider my own role and responsibilities as I work to help the system see itself. The following moral dilemma serves as an example.

Where companies are blatantly exploiting muleteers and their mules, exposing these practices could damage the company's interests. Failure to do so, however, can shield them from public scrutiny and perpetuate exploitative practices. What should one do with such information? How was I to balance any responsibility I had to these companies with the responsibility I had to tell the mule and muleteer's story?

A delicate line has to be walked ... one that recognises that I was there as an action researcher and change agent, not as an undercover journalist. The notion of justice, challenged me to see welfare from within practices. I therefore recognise that many agencies will be unaware of the impact of their policies and practices on mule welfare and will often then deny the extent of the problem. The co-sensing journeys undertaken assume that there is no single prescribed answer but that each organisation must find answers that allow them to develop and establish practices that respect mule and muleteer welfare. Support was needed throughout this process: Opportunities were provided for agencies to undertake co-seeing and co-sensing journeys.

At the same time, I recognise that my primary moral responsibility was to the voiceless, abused and exploited mule. What therefore should I do when witnessing animal cruelty, especially if the acts were either immoral or illegal? Does a confidential report remain confidential when the recommendations it makes are not acted upon?

There are no easy answers to these questions, especially when I had no clear answer to the question whose morality, whose laws? As an outsider, where no working relationship had been established with the company or the company was failing to accept any responsibility, I often felt I had little choice other than to make use of social media to ensure the mule's voice was heard and their suffering seen. On one occasion, a terribly overloaded mule was filmed and photographed working for a Swiss company. . Conscious of my power to damage the company's reputation, I refrained from naming them. Posting the video online lead to several concerned individuals writing to the company involved and complaining. A video of a mule being dragged down a hillside in a traditional bit by her handler was similarly posted on line. The handler was a regular employee of a company who claimed to have a policy banning the traditional bit. That this employee had been working for them, for six months, in this way showed that the policy was not implemented. This had been reported several times without action being taken. Posting online was therefore a final attempt to intervene on behalf of the mule. This was again done without naming the company and was effective, eliciting a threat to sue (perhaps the ultimate defensive action) and a stronger stance on traditional bits¹⁴¹. These are thus examples of outsider interventions in favour of the mule that do not invest in the relationship with the people concerned; they are to be contrasted with insider interventions in which a relationship of trust is established and a common intention to work towards improving mule welfare crystallised. It is through the latter relationships that a deeper understanding can arise, one that can explore the gaps in awareness and barriers to change. From an ethical perspective, it is important to realise that a focus on what is wrong with a system can lead into a cycle of absencing; there is therefore a need for the researcher to develop their awareness of how organisations can suspend judgement and redirect their attention towards realistic alternatives. I had to be clear about my own values and beliefs, whilst also challenging myself to learn ways of asking difficult questions of people, whilst managing my own expectations, frustrations and judgements. The answer, I believe, lies in bringing people together to establish generative dialogue; it is, about facilitating the respectful interaction and negotiation of situated knowledges about mules and mule welfare that do not usually dialogue. It is about striving to ensure that the knowledge that emerges and that I

¹⁴¹ The owner of the company also exercised their right to withdraw from the agency chapter.

contribute to does not exclude other ways of knowing. It is, as Haraway (1991, p.190) puts it, about "difference and the loving care people might take to learn how to see faithfully from another's point of view". It is about taking responsibility for the power and privilege I carry as a white, educated professional with a strong sense of social justice and a tendency to be disapproving. It's about attending to and delicately striking a balance between my willingness to "take a strong line and perhaps be seen to oppress a minority group" (Cousquer, 2017, p. 140)¹⁴² and my striving to ensure those groups are involved in a process of continuing generative dialogue.

4.7 *Summary*

This chapter has described the Action Research methodology I developed to study how those involved in mountain tourism attend to the mule and enact her welfare. Drawing on Theory U, this action-oriented approach is founded on co-seeing, co-sensing, co-presencing and co-creating journeys, journeys that give rise to dialogical encounters that allow a multiplicity of narratives to be explored and new awarenesses of the mule and of mule welfare crafted. My account of the action inquiries undertaken with myself, mules, muleteers and agencies has sketched in the creative ways in which I set about developing a rich and critical understanding of the multiple ways by which we come to know, care and take responsibility for the mule within different practices. I argue that, the imaginative ways of helping others attend to the mule provides, not just a second look, but a chance to "re-gard" or "re-spect" (Rohr, 2016) the mule.

Suspending and redirecting one's attention, being present and open to the other are core elements in my approach and allowed me to develop a view of the whole that shifts from the bit in the mule's mouth, to the mule and on to the muleteer and his employers. The empirical chapters will thus develop a rich critique of the multitude of ways in which the mule's welfare is enacted within different practices and these different realities then negotiated. In developing these narratives, I recognise the need to keep the process of knowing open and creative even as I present the stories and images from those journeys. This is the essence of 'Mythos' advocated by Bruner (1988, 2002); it is where experience comes to be endowed with meaning, where the entanglement

¹⁴² This has echoes of the situation described by Benhabib (2002, p. 89) in which she decries a situation in which white liberal guilt is pitted against the crimes of passion of Third World individuals".

between knower and known is preserved. Storytelling thus serves as a counterbalance to the “traditional academic overreliance on critical discourse and analytic forms of knowing” (Heron and Reason, 2008, p. 372; Mead, 2001, pp. 59-65; Yorks and Kasl, 2002). I do, however, attempt a critique of these different welfares through the perspective offered by Theory U of absencing and presencing. The essence of ‘Logos’ that infuses my critique of our relationship with the mule is thus humbly offered as a helpful but not a definitive evaluation of the process of coming to know and love the mule.

THE TRADITIONAL BIT

Some people see things as they are and ask "Why"

I dream dreams that never were and ask "Why not?"

George Bernard Shaw¹⁴³

¹⁴³ Shaw (1921)

5.1 *Journeying into Awareness*

This chapter proposes the traditional bit as the entry point to understanding how the relationship with the mule is enacted. It recounts how I, and subsequently others, became aware of the bit and, perhaps more importantly, how the bit and the mule created by the bit come into focus as we learn to attend.

Awareness of the traditional bit as a welfare issue and of how to address it emerged in something of a piece meal fashion. Awareness was ever-evolving too, for, once insights were obtained and shared, it became imperative that alternative ways of relating to the mule be explored. This chapter therefore also tells how seeing led to caring and thence to prototyping.

5.1.1 *Attending to the traditional bit*

When a bit-part actor takes on a central role, the audience is drawn into a new narrative, one that rests on the protagonist as he/she moves out of the shadows and comes to occupy our attention. Arguably, there is no reason why the story of Don Quixote should be any worthier of our attention than that of his horse, Rocinante, his squire Sancho Panza or his squire's donkey, Dapple¹⁴⁴. And so, the protagonist, for the purposes of this chapter, is a metal object, placed in the mouth of horses, mules and donkeys to control and direct them.

A metal object? Placed? Hardly words to capture your attention or mobilise your indignation? Therein lies the problem of understanding how we attend to welfare. How does our protagonist make its appearance on stage? How does it emerge from the mouth of a mule and what wordless stories accompany its appearance? Is it possible for such a thing to burst on the scene and suddenly capture our attention? Could I simply throw it at your feet or place it in your hands? No... for awareness demands persistent curiosity and questioning.

Over the years, I caught snapshots of the suffering and horrors that this object inflicted on the mule. But what was I glimpsing? What is this whole that lurks behind the part? In the same way that the leaf allows Goethe to see the tree, I ask how the bit allows us to

¹⁴⁴ For an account of how Dapple, the donkey, might be attended to better see Merrifield (2008, pp. 78, 102, 106-108).

turn and look upstream and ask where does this come from, what is the source (Bortoft, 2012; 1996)? During the five years I spent instructing at the guide school (CFAMM), I had included it as a welfare concern, without having either the photos to show the effects it had on mules, nor access to alternative solutions, nor the leverage needed to transform existing muleteering practice. Over the years that followed, I pieced together the various ways this instrument¹⁴⁵ mediates and, in many ways, has come to define the relationship between man and mule.

5.1.2 Attending as a Tourist

In August 2014, I undertook an arduous, ten-day, mule-supported trek with an Austrian couple who had come out to discover the High Atlas and learn about mule welfare (Schmidt, 2015). On the day of departure (Figures 5.1-5.2), we tried as-best-we-could to take responsibility for the welfare of the mules that would be accompanying us:

As we waited for the mules to appear at the bend in the road ... I wondered whether we really needed three mules. Brahim had phoned me last night to check again that we needed this many mules. I said yes as it would give us more of a margin. He had originally proposed two. When I saw what they were carrying, I had no doubt ... Two mules would have resulted in overloading.

Brahim was keen to get going and I, feeling confused that I was not being afforded the time to examine the mules and check that there were no problems, found myself having to countermand the start. We had not gone more than a hundred metres, when I explained to Brahim that I wanted to show Karoline and Thomas the mule's backs. This felt like a big ask and I was conscious of the effort I had to make to request this. This was partly because I felt rushed and under pressure to get going. There was also perhaps an assumption that Brahim was to be trusted and that I was asking him to prove this – rather than taking his word for it.¹⁴⁶

Attending to welfare in advance of departure is difficult for the tourist. Expectations of what is acceptable and what is possible clash. If this is true for overloading (as imagined, or calculated, through the ratio of mules to tourists), it is even more so where other issues are concerned. Seeing the mule is difficult for there is little time or space for attending on the morning of departure, when the mules, if not already loaded, are

¹⁴⁵ An instrument, I would characterise as an “instrument of oppression and torture”.

¹⁴⁶ Field Notes 16, page 13 (8th August, 2014).

almost completely hidden by their pack saddles. Attending to their backs, body condition, soundness and the load each is carrying makes for a lot of attending, especially for a trekker on holiday. It leaves even less room for attending to the way mules are controlled.

I was able to have all the burdahs removed in order to check the backs of the three mules. They all looked good and were pain free. I had, however, been disappointed to see that all three of the mules had traditional Berber bits. Fortunately, there were no signs of blood or oral discomfort. The muleteers and Brahim explained that the mules were all strong and could not be controlled using the SPANA bit.¹⁴⁷

Brahim and I had discussed the issues of overloading and wounds on multiple occasions. We had explored possible solutions to the tethering injuries I had become concerned about ever since we had taken a mule with a nasty tethering injury on a trek into the Siroua massif, in 2010 (Cousquer, 2011b). Despite this, I still felt uncomfortable insisting on checks and imposing my expectations. The supply of suitable mules had always been his responsibility and the norm setting was something I could influence but had no ownership of, or power over. Hamish Brown (2008; 2012) had similarly delegated all decisions pertaining to the mules he made his crossing of the Atlas with, in 1995, to his local guide. Hamish trusted his Sirdar implicitly and did not question his decision making. I, by contrast, wanted to question but did not know how to. Attending is thus about knowing how to question.

Unlike almost any other trekker, I knew where to look. Or so I thought. I had noticed the bits and commented on them, questioning their necessity. I did not, however, have it in me to object to their use. I had no alternative, neither did I have a clear enough understanding of what my role and therefore my responsibilities in that situation might be. What after all, could I ask for or indeed demand?

¹⁴⁷ Field Notes 16, page 13 (8th August, 2014).



Figure 5.1: Preparing for departure. At the start of the day, our three mules are loaded with our bags and camping equipment for a ten-day trek. It is not customary for mules to be examined, their pack saddles taken off, their body condition assessed and their backs checked for wounds. The presence of a traditional bit in their mouths also passes unnoticed and therefore unquestioned. For the visiting trekker, it is difficult to attend to the mule and to mule welfare.



Figure 5.2: Waiting patiently. Hassan is one of three muleteers Brahim had accompany us on our trek. Here, Hassan's loaded mule is pictured at the start of the day. She appears to be waiting patiently, a traditional bit in her mouth, her reins on the floor. Trekkers and tourists gazing upon this scene would have little awareness of (and ability to evaluate) the mule's welfare, let alone take action to safeguard it. Indeed, for me, almost two years elapsed before I came to truly understand the significance of this image and why the mule was standing so patiently, her foot on the reins: she had learnt that if she ran off, she would get a sharp stab in the roof of her mouth.

5.1.3 *Attending to Downloading and Absencing*

I was used to hearing claims that the mules were too strong to be worked without a traditional bit. It is a prime example of downloading: a single truth that, once accepted, leaves little space for others. It was, a response that I profoundly disagreed with and one I did not have an adequate response for. To understand this better, it is helpful to tell how the traditional bit hides more sinister truths. Two days before leaving on trek, I spoke with a muleteer called Hassan:

In Imlil, yesterday evening, I bumped into Hassan – who’s mule had died back in June. He told me that he had bought a new mule, a younger mule, for 5000 MAD from Asni. He showed me the mule and told me, when I asked why he was using a traditional bit, that it was because she was too strong.

I was somewhat dismayed at this. I was, however, relieved that she had a good (wound and pain free) back.¹⁴⁸

I had first met Hassan a few months earlier. I had seen his old, emaciated mule carrying guest suitcases up to a hotel above Imlil (Figure 5.3) and had been so concerned by her state that I asked the staff there to send me the mule to examine. What I found inside her mouth (Figures 5.4a-5.4c) moved me to tears and angered me. Unseen and unknown to all those who exploited her failing body, this mule had suffered extensive trauma to the bars of her mouth, resulting from the abuse of the traditional bit (Figure 5.4d) that had been used to drive her on and keep her working.

The mule looked so uncomfortable; I could literally see the pain in her eyes, not to mention the blood in her mouth. What I found in her mouth surprised and shocked even me though!! The bars on both sides of her mouth had deep wounds where the bit had been pulled into the mucosa, cutting it up and leaving it raw and bleeding. No wonder she had not been able to eat.

As we set about cleaning out the wounds, Brahim went past. He leant over the wall and commented – “elle mange pas bien henh? It is striking how the bottom line for many owners is their mule’s appetite and they appear to have some difficulty seeing beyond that. Earlier, when coming past the Kasbah, we had seen a thin mule (perhaps even this one) and Brahim had said – “elle est très fatigüe!”¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ Field Notes 16, page 12 (7th August, 2014).

¹⁴⁹ Field Notes 9, page 10 (5th May, 2014).

Very tired. Eating badly. These descriptions of the lived realities of an old mule reflect how she is attended to. Her lack of appetite and energy are statements of fact. Or, perhaps, euphemisms for something else. Where Brahim and Hassan saw a mule that was unable to do what she should be doing (eating and working), I saw an old, abused mule that needed to be retired or euthanased. Somehow, I could redirect my attention to other truths, truths that were there waiting, like Hagen's cow (1997, p. 28), to appear.



Figure 5.3: Hassan's emaciated mule labours up the path to the hotel, carrying the suitcases of a holidaying couple who have walked up separately, oblivious to the state and suffering of the mule carrying their bags, oblivious to the traditional bit and horrendous injuries in her mouth, oblivious to the hotel's lack of policies in place to protect mule welfare. They, of course, were on holiday! And, as such, oblivious to their responsibilities. But who would spare this mule a second glance and, attending to her respectfully, recognise her emaciated state? Who would see and feel and act on her behalf?



Figure 5.4a: Hassan's mule, when viewed from the front, has a fearful and pained look to her. There is blood pooling inside her lower lip and the traditional bit that has been used to force her to work is hanging from her mouth.



Figures 5.4b-5.4c: After cleaning out the food material that obscured the wounds to the bars of the mouth, the full extent of the mule's injuries become visible, both on the right (above) and left (below) sides of her mouth.





Figure 5.4d: The traditional bit removed from the mouth of Hassan's mule is the obvious cause of the injuries she has suffered. If this were true, replacing it with a smooth modern bit would address the problem. Sadly, a focus on the equipment obscures more fundamental problems. These include the relationship between mule and handler, the muleteer's lack of access to education, training and equipment and the circumstances that allow them to purchase and then work a mule that is unfit for work.

The injuries were so severe that, despite being rested for several weeks, the mule died. Her plight had gone largely unnoticed by the tourists whose bags she had carried up to the hotel, her suffering effectively ignored by the hotel staff who had employed her owner to transport the luggage. Ignored yes. Obscured too by her work, her load, her passing and our inability to question. And here was Hassan with a new mule, again being worked in a traditional bit.

The causes of the horrendous injuries in this and other mules' mouths were unclear, however. Where do we look for causes and causal mechanisms (Scharmer, 2009, pp.368-373), to what should we attend? Superficially, one might be able to single out the traditional bit for it was this *Causa materialis* that had directly caused the trauma to the bars of the mouth. If this was true though, simply replacing the bit with a modern (wider, smoother, stainless steel) more humane alternative would solve such problems. Why then did I feel so uncomfortable seeing Hassan's mule being given a well-made snaffle bit (Figure 5.5)?

In the case of Hassan's old mule, the problem was not that she was strong. It was not that she needed a different bit or even a head collar; she was simply unfit to work. In the absence of a viable solution that respected the mule's need for rest and retirement¹⁵⁰, she was given a bridle with a snaffle bit. This is symptomatic of the impotence one is faced with when trying to solve a much bigger problem: unable to see and address the underlying causes, one is left addressing a false cause.

¹⁵⁰ She was subsequently offered retirement by a retired British couple who were in the process of setting up a Donkey Sanctuary near Marrakech but died without being able to take up this offer.



Figure 5.5: Hassan's mule is given a bridle with a snaffle bit. Such a mule does not, however, need a better bit. The bit is not the problem. She should not be working!

Suspending judgement and engaging curiously: pondering how this unfortunate mule came to be being worked with these injuries has occupied my mind ever since. What really caused these injuries? Who is responsible? How could they have been prevented? This experience left me with many unanswered questions:

Why, for example, had the holidaying tourists allowed this poor mule to carry their bags?

Why had the hotel employed this muleteer and his mule?

Why were there no policies in place locally to prevent mules working in traditional bits and under such abject conditions?

Why had the owner bought a mule in this condition and subjected her to such abuse?

Why were no alternatives available, including alternative equipment, alternative sources of equipment, alternative ways of working a mule?

Why in short, did it have to be this way? I did not have the answers to this question for I needed to explore (and indeed imagine) the multiplicity of alternatives available. This moment was therefore my 'call to adventure' (Campbell, 2008, pp. 43-48). This was the encounter that stirred me, that left me feeling such great sadness and anger that I knew I had to do something (Scharmer, 2009, pp. 378-387). This was the experience that convinced me that things had to change, that spurred me to action and to the pursuit of sustainable solutions that tackled some of the underlying causal factors. A messenger had shown up with an invitation to something that I could not refuse (Scharmer, 2009, p. 184) and I attended to this messenger, responding, as Scharmer suggests, with a yes first, only later figuring out solutions.

At this stage, I had a limited understanding of what might be possible. Many different factors were contributing to this state of affairs. I had barely started attending to the whole picture and had not started developing solutions capable of addressing the underlying problems. My mind was, however, opening itself to the problem, to the lack of available solutions and to the resistance to change that the existing status quo threw in the way of progress. Trekking with a team of muleteers and attending closely to their practices afforded me the opportunity to study, unpick and understand the assumptions, beliefs and understanding that inform muleteering' practice and the way they co-create relationships with their mules. And so, we return to our trekking team...

5.1.4 Co-Seeing Journeys

Our three mules, with traditional bits in their mouths, headed up the track and onto the narrow mule path that climbs up out of the Mizane valley to reach the col known as the Tizi Mzik. I was left watching and pondering this way of working a mule and trying to share what I was seeing and feeling with Karoline and Thomas. Brahim and one of the muleteers, meanwhile, had disappeared to visit a sick relative¹⁵¹, leaving the other two muleteers to drive the mules on (Figure 5.6a).

¹⁵¹ The cycle of life is such that locals are regularly either visiting sick relatives or attending funerals.

The mules were seen trying to graze as they went up the path and I was left thinking how much easier it would be for them if they were being worked in a head collar, rather than a bridle.¹⁵²

This local practice is born of the pastoral and shepherding practices of the local communities (Cousquer, 2017) with the same practices of shouting directions and throwing stones being used to move the animals on.

Before leaving Imlil, I had retrieved a head collar. My intention was to see if I could persuade one of the muleteers to use it rather than the bridle. I first had to consider how I could come alongside them and engage them in a journey of inquiry. It was with this intention in mind, that I found myself sitting down, that evening, with our three muleteers (Figure 5.6b) to share with them the slide show of images I had collected of the mouth injuries of the mules from the village of Tizi Oussems, just below us.

These injuries are easily overlooked if one does not notice the subtle clues that lead one to seek out the injury inside the mouth:

The last mule that came in for examination arrived with a young lad on her back. I could see at a distance that there was blood in the mule's saliva and noted the force with which the young boy yanked on the bit. Houda did not spot the lesion – but it was not easy to find for it was hidden in a fold of mucosa under the tongue.¹⁵³

The mule in question was examined as part of a study¹⁵⁴ on the welfare of the mule in the two neighbouring valleys. The blood in this mule's saliva (Figure 5.7a-5.7b) drew my attention to the biting injury and to the fact that the oral examinations¹⁵⁵ were not very thorough and were probably missing a lot of pathology (Figure 5.7c). Certainly, we were not evaluating the roof or the bars of the mouth or the bars for signs of repeated trauma and would have missed injuries that were no longer bleeding.

This pathology is better known to archaeologists studying the origins of domestication (Bendrey, 2012, 2011, 2007a, 2007b) and to veterinary practitioners trying to study the

¹⁵² Field Notes 16, page 15 (8th August, 2014)

¹⁵³ Field Notes 6, page 12 (17th April, 2014)

¹⁵⁴ The study was undertaken by a final year student from the Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II, in Rabat. I had been charged with supervising the student and we had been collecting a wide range of data on different aspects of mule welfare.

¹⁵⁵ that the student had been conducting

relationship between bone pathology, the bit and the horse's experience (Cooke, 1999, 2011). Attending to the trauma left behind by the bit is thus a clinical matter, founded on an ability and willingness to examine the mouth: An ability, or competency, born of training, of familiarity, of an awareness of where the teeth lie and of how to examine without being bitten or upsetting the mule. Attending to the trauma is also, however, pathological and archaeological. In this sense, the materiality of the bit appears in the mouth (a place) and across time, both in terms of an individual's lifespan and the histories¹⁵⁶ of the domination and domestication of the horse. These materialities are different, hinting at the multiplicity of narratives the bit gives rise to.

The traditional bit's material productions lie hidden inside the mouth, beneath the overlying soft tissues, inscribed in the periosteum and in the nerves, mind and spirit of the equine. Hidden too by the gap between the stimulus of the bit and the response of the equine, a gap that is easily filled with the narrative threads that suit the intention of the storyteller. When I attended to the loaded mules being worked with bits in their mouths, I saw the grass that wasn't there; when, later, we sat down together to look at images of the mouth injuries I had recorded, we attended to what should not have been there (Figures 5.6a-5.6b). That which these narratives make present or absent is therefore welfare.

The photos we shared were collected during some earlier survey work that had taught me to attend to clinical signs (Figure 5.7a-5.7b). Restraining, handling, examining (Figure 5.7c) then lead to diagnosing and awareness (Figure 5.7d).

Looking carefully. Looking care-fully, attending fully with care. My own practice provided a window into the mouth, one that led me to attend to the many actions of the traditional bit. What else lay hidden in the mouth? What was I not seeing? Where did I need to redirect my attention? One starting point was to consider how the traditional bit sits in the mouth (Figure 5.6d) and functions¹⁵⁷. But I also needed to step back and consider the issue more holistically: I needed to contemplate its appearances. As Bortoft (2012) emphasises we need to take appearance seriously and attend

¹⁵⁶ There are of course many ways of trying to piece together that history.

¹⁵⁷ Clayton (1985) describes how this can be undertaken fluoroscopically. See also McLean and McGreevy (2010).



Figures 5.6a-5.6b: Two of the muleteers walk behind their mules on the ascent to the Tizi Mzik. The mules desire to graze is frustrated by the traditional bit in their mouths and the fact they are repeatedly driven on. Bits are in their mouths, fear in their minds. Grass and calmness are not just absent but absented. Below the muleteers gather round the laptop in the evening to look at the injuries caused by the traditional bit. They attend to what should not be there – blood, wounds, pain, fear and distrust. Imagining what should be there is an altogether different way of attending.





Figure 5.7a: The blood tinged froth on the gums and lips of this mule, the similarly coloured drop of saliva that is about to fall from this mule's lower lip might draw the attention to the fact there is an injury within the mule's mouth. The curled tongue, the open mouth, the owner's clenched fist, the control, the unnaturalness of it all, might all invite curiosity and concern...



Figures 5.7b-5.7c: The easily missed bloody saliva prompted me to undertake an oral exam and determine the location and nature of the injury. This is not something the average owner, guide or tourist would ever do. It requires skill, confidence, curiosity and consideration.





Figure 5.7d: This young mule has a traditional bit in her mouth. The bit's action commands her attention. The right-angled bar of the bit (arrow) is in contact with the bars of the mouth and can easily traumatise both the bars and the sublingual tissues. The port (A) is raised into the roof of the mouth when the reins are pulled, forcing the mouth open.

dynamically, paying attention to the material appearance and the way something comes into appearance.

Morning, day 3 of our trek and I asked the muleteers if any of them would be willing to try the head collar I had brought with me. There were no takers! They were all of the opinion the mules were too strong and would run off. My invitation refused, I was left to ponder my next move. I needed to get into their map and, in turn, ask them to step into mine, to understand each other's world maps (Wagner, 1986, pp. 63-69). The picture I was getting was that the traditional bit, their local tethering practices and their willingness to ride a loaded mule were all quite normal to them and they did not really see a need to change. My map had, at its centre, mule welfare and the pathological and psychological traumas of oppressive muleteering practices, theirs a muleteering practice that worked well and that they were satisfied with.

A few days later, I waited on a col for our mules and watched another group of mules arrive beside me:

One of the shepherds arrived on his grey mule with a large log of juniper in the *chwari*. As he reined up his mule, the mule's mouth was forced open and she appeared to lift her head to relieve the discomfort provoked by the action of the bit.¹⁵⁸

The image I captured captures a moment of attention. As the shepherd smiled and greeted me, I saw distress written across his mule's face. I could not return the greeting. I could not absent myself from the signs of discomfort and pain that I was learning to recognise. This image (Figure 5.8a) would, for me, come to symbolise the hidden discomfort endured by mules and other equines working in traditional bits across Morocco. It is captured and glorified in images used to promote the country and the Moroccan's so-called mastery of the horse. The open mouth - so unnatural and unacceptable to me - was something that Moroccans were familiar with and did not see the need to question. McLean and McGreevy (2010) similarly comment on the need to recognise that "on the bit head and neck posture" seen in classical dressage (and hyperflexion in particular) is unnatural and typically achieved through force.

¹⁵⁸ Field Notes 16, page 36 (11th August, 2014)



Figure 5.8a: A sharp yank on this mule's reins forces the mule's mouth open and brings the mule to an abrupt stop. The nostril is flared and the mule appears to be crying.



Figure 5.8b: The same mule continues to hold her mouth open after being stopped. Her ears are back, she is clearly uncomfortable and distressed. The bit thus ensures that she attends to her master even if he does not attend to her. The bit is not designed for this.



Figure 5.8c: Our own mules “make good progress”, neither stopping for food, rest or water. The rhythm and manner of their progress is dictated, not by them, but by the bit in their mouths and the impatient shouts of “Iraa Iraa” and occasional stone thrown at them from behind by the muleteers.

They suggest that these and other short cuts are detrimental to welfare and have arisen through lack of knowledge, becoming established as shortcuts that have then “become entrenched as *modus operandi* in equestrian culture” (p. 188). They conclude by suggesting that the golden age of horsemanship may come when debate is better informed and welfare “more evidence-based and less a matter of opinion”. The fact that ‘debate’ rather than ‘dialogue’ is referred to here says much about the ability and willingness of those involved to listen.

The traditional bit commands attention. The mule attends and attends well. The quality of the muleteer’s attention is poor, however. The design of the bit thus ensures that a particularly material relationship emerges, one characterised by exquisite sensitivity for the equine and alarming insensitivity for the equestrian. As McLean and McGreevy (2010, p. 193) point out: “The length of the shank magnifies the leverage through the bit so that the rider may be duped into believing that the lightness in his hands correlates with lightness in the horse’s mouth.”

Attending is thus about looking beyond the intended outcome and seeing the equine and what is absented when a highly efficient tool commands attention. Attending is about being present, it is about not being duped.

5.1.5 Attending to What the Bit Makes Present

Over the next few days we saw more examples of mules with oral pain. Two stand out. In the first, I express concern for the abnormal tongue carriage of one of our mules (Figure 5.9) and experience confusion over how to interpret what I am seeing and what action to take. The confusion is, in part, a product of the resistance I encounter as I try to create space for the mule’s discomfort to be recognised and taken seriously. In the second, at the end of the trek, I am asked by Brahim to look at a mule from his own village that was no longer able to eat.

Example 1

This morning I was disturbed to see Hassan's mule with her tongue hanging out. She was trying to reposition it in her mouth and appeared unable to. This continued and it was not clear what the reason was. It did not appear that the tongue was trapped above the bit. She repeatedly pulled it back in but it kept falling out to the left. I was concerned that she was uncomfortable. The muleteers and Brahim did not appear to be concerned. When I pointed out to Brahim that she was shaking her head, he replied saying that it was due to the flies. I was not convinced as the others did not appear to be shaking their heads and were just in front of her.

I felt frustrated and angry that no one was taking this seriously. I managed to stop them and remove the bit. By then though the other mules had moved off (Brahim and the muleteers had not thought to stop them) and she grew anxious to follow them. Hassan replaced the bit but it did not seem to make much difference ...

Are these mules really in discomfort? My impression was that, in this case, she was. She appeared to be trying to reposition her tongue. I am though assuming that the normal appearance of a closed mouth is normal.

Later I voiced my frustration to Brahim that they had not come with SPANA bits. I emphasised that he needed to ensure that mules coming on any further treks that he organises for me do not have traditional bits. Am I right to do so? Is my belief that these traditional bits are the cause of discomfort to the mule justified? I suspect so – especially when one sees how a pull on the bit causes the mule to open their mouths¹⁵⁹

My attention to head shaking and tongue carriage, my willingness to attempt an interpretation of the mule's own response to the bit reflect more than just my concern for her comfort and wellbeing. They reflect the presencing of that which a focus on compliance coupled with a lack of knowledge about and concern for the mule makes absent. Absent until the mule's experience threatens her ability to comply with the muleteer's intention to exploit her.

¹⁵⁹ Field Notes 16, page 45 (12th August, 2014)

Example 2

At the end of the trek, Brahim received a phone call from a concerned muleteer. They know who to ring and that I will help. Once again, I am confronted with visible signs of oral pain (Figure 5.10a). This time, however, the mule is unable to eat and it is this that has prompted the owner to ask for my help.

The mule had a large mass under the tongue. It was the size of a large orange and there was a necrotic smell. I suspected an abscess. The mule had lots of food in her mouth and did not appear to be swallowing. This was confirmed by the owner – she was barely eating!

I explained that this problem could not wait until SPANA visited at the end of the month and that the mule needed antibiotics and surgery. She therefore needed to get down to Marrakech. I emphasised the urgency. The owner did not appear willing to pay for this and Brahim asked if the SPANA lorry could attend and pick her up.¹⁶⁰

The mule before me had clearly suffered a biting injury that had then become infected. Awareness of how traumatised tissue is vulnerable to secondary infections, of how abscesses form, of the manner in which the bit is soiled with faeces and other contaminants every time it is thrown to the ground allow this interpretation to be proposed despite the absence of the bit from the mouth and in the absence of a chronology of events. The causal chain appeared clear to me as did the therapeutic options: the abscess needed to be drained and flushed to relieve the discomfort and allow the affected tissues to heal. As the attending vet, I could state this authoritatively. The bit's traces could be interpreted. This awareness was not, however, shared by the owner and the community. There was a reluctance to seeking treatment and a resistance to my questioning local biting practices. Multiple material ontologies whose common locus rests on the bit. Gaps in awareness and knowledge thus exist between the mule owners of traditional communities and those whose life experiences have given them, not other perspectives a common map (on how a mule should be worked and such injuries addressed whether preventatively or therapeutically) but different maps. What the bit makes present thus depend on a

¹⁶⁰ Field Notes 16, pages 66-67 (16th, August, 2014)



Figure 5.9: Hassan's mule carries her tongue to the side of her mouth and appears to struggle to replace it where it belongs. Note also the flared nostril and tear flow. Attending to these signs means not absenting oneself from the question of how the mule and muleteer are each defined by the bit. Through the bit, the mule is forced to submit; she is crushed, her muleness diminished. And through the bit, the human dominates but rather than becoming an overman (or *Übermensch* from Nietzsche, 1954), becomes less human. Inhuman.



Figures 5.10a-5.10b: The mule can be seen looking depressed, her tongue is hanging out, there is some swelling around her cheeks and a lot of dribble gathering about her lower lip. Examination of her mouth reveals a large, painful abscess under the tongue makes it difficult for her to swallow and eat, hence the food build up in her mouth.



practitioner's map for, to push the metaphor further, each practice has its own key. The mule and the bit may bear the same symbol but, ontologically, the mule and the bit are multiple. The bit materialises control, obedience, and compliance; it also materialises pain, injury, suffering, hunger, thirst, fear. Different presences, some for the muleteer, others for the mule.

5.1.6 Attending to Appeals for Help

Absences can be made present; much as presences can be made absent. Appeals for help represent calls to attend to the helpless, to their stories and to the multitude of ways these stories are denied.

Attending to appeals for help is hard. For tourists, it is easy to feel overwhelmed, to fail to see or understand. As Karoline, had observed "it's not that we don't want to see ... it's that there are so many things to see." Despite this, tourists do care about the mule when they see her suffering, they just don't know how to attend to and interpret their cries for help (Johnson, 2008). Karoline concludes: "... the mules are not beggars, who deliberately get in your way and seek to attract your attention. They do not ask to be seen or to be helped." But they do try to help themselves when their ability to accommodate the insensitivity of their handlers and riders is no longer enough, when too much is asked of them. Attending to such moments is important for it presences how and to what extent we absent ourselves from their suffering.

In March 2014, I witnessed a mule fall tragically over a cliff to her death, in front of a group of Norwegian walkers staying at a local hotel. The Norwegian guide accompanying the group¹⁶¹ provided the following description of the accident:

It was in the last week of March and our group of 15 members were walking up the path above the Kasbah along the track to Toubkal. When we were just under the road to Mzik we saw a man sitting on a mule standing on the road waiting for us to pass. The mule was standing very near the cliff side, when the first member in our group was around 20 metres from the mule, the mule suddenly, for no apparent reason, took a step aside and started to tumble down the cliff side. The man was still on the mule but fell off 10 meters below the road before the absolute vertical cliff. The mule was

¹⁶¹ Himself a regular visitor to Imlil

going tumbling on turn after turn and then over the vertical cliff and down to the riverside 30 meters below. There were [*sic*] not a sound from the mule during the fall.

We took care of the muledriver and gave him first aid, he was hurt but not so bad, no broken bones or arms. For us it was terrible to watch, some were crying and we were very touched by what happened in front of us.

Spontaneously we in our group collected a sum of 7.000 MAD to the family who had lost the important mule.

The group were badly traumatised by the experience. Stories crowd in, obscuring the reality for the mule. My focus was on the mule, however and I ran down to check that she had not survived the fall. Slowed by the difficult ground that lay between me and the waterfall below, it took me more than ten minutes of scrambling to reach the mule. I was relieved to see a lifeless head that peered up at me from the swirling waters of the Mizane river (Figures 5.11a-5.11b), for her own sake and mine as I would have had no way of euthanasing her.

At the time, this accident was blamed on the mule stumbling or taking fright at the approach of the group. I was puzzled by the description of the mule 'flipping over' provided by the local guide who was with the Norwegian group. I failed to see the significance of this detail; I could not understand why on a broad track with the group still to emerge from the path that climbs up to the track, a mule should step over the edge and then throw herself backwards (Figures 5.10c-5.10d). It was only as I came to understand the function of the traditional bit, the way it jams into the roof of the mouth and forces the mouth open and came to see how mules try to evade it by throwing their heads up that I started to see the actions of the rider and his abuse of the traditional bit in his mule's mouth as the cause of the accident¹⁶².

Later, I discovered and came to understand how others had previously seen the abuse of the bit as the cause of such accidents. Cunninghame-Graham's highly developed awareness of horses and horsemanship allows him to do just that in his account of a similar accident in Morocco (1988, p. 116)¹⁶³. Such explanations, however, remain

¹⁶² In the same way, I failed initially to appreciate the significance of the trailing reins in Figure 5.1b.

¹⁶³ "A mare and foal feeding close by had set Si Omar's horse neighing and plunging, and he, swaying a little to the plunges, may perhaps have touched it in the mouth too sharply with the bit. After a spring or two, the horse passaged and reared, and lighting, on a flat slab of rock which cropped up in the middle of the road,

invisible and therefore deniable; it is far easier to blame the mule, to label her as difficult and a bit crazy. Attending well demands great awareness and ability. As McLean and McGreevy point out (2010, p. 189), citing (Ödberg and de Cartier d'Yves, 2005) even “trained judges have difficulty in detecting lightness” in the hands.

At the hotel, the generosity of the clients towards the mule owner meant he would now be able to purchase a replacement mule. No one, however, spared a thought for the mule or exercised their curiosity as to how this ‘accident’ might have occurred. And so, we fail to see her attempts to escape, to help herself. We absent ourselves, closing our minds and hearts to her story, preferring another, more human, less muley story, one in which the owner’s loss and the tourist’s concern that they may have caused the accident were both addressed. The traditional bit, the effect it has on the mule, the owner’s reliance on a painful implement to communicate with, train and subjugate her, his lack of awareness of the alternatives and their relative merits, the lack of alternative equipment, education and training, none of these made it into the stories that were told around the dinner table that night.

The clients whose bags had been carried up to the hotel on an emaciated mule with horrendous biting injuries (Figures 5.3, 5.4a-5.4c) were similarly oblivious to the mule’s suffering and the cries for help that were there to be attended to. Had they known about it they would have cared. The hotel’s owners were unaware too for there was no tangible organ for looking and seeing. No one therefore saw the emaciated mule hidden under the pack saddle, no one saw the wounds in her mouth or the difficulty she had eating, no one saw the way the traditional bit was used to force her to work or her lonely death at home.

The bit’s absence from these stories is remarkable given its centrality! The material suffering and, in some cases the deaths, it mediates pass unrecognised as other protagonists and narratives take precedence. This does not have to be so. If we attend to what else is there, if we allow images the power to command our attention, alternative stories emerge.

slipped sideways and fell with a loud crash, its shoes, in the last struggle, sending a shower of sparks into the air.” From: “The Grave of the Horseman” (Cunninghame Graham, 1988, p. 116).

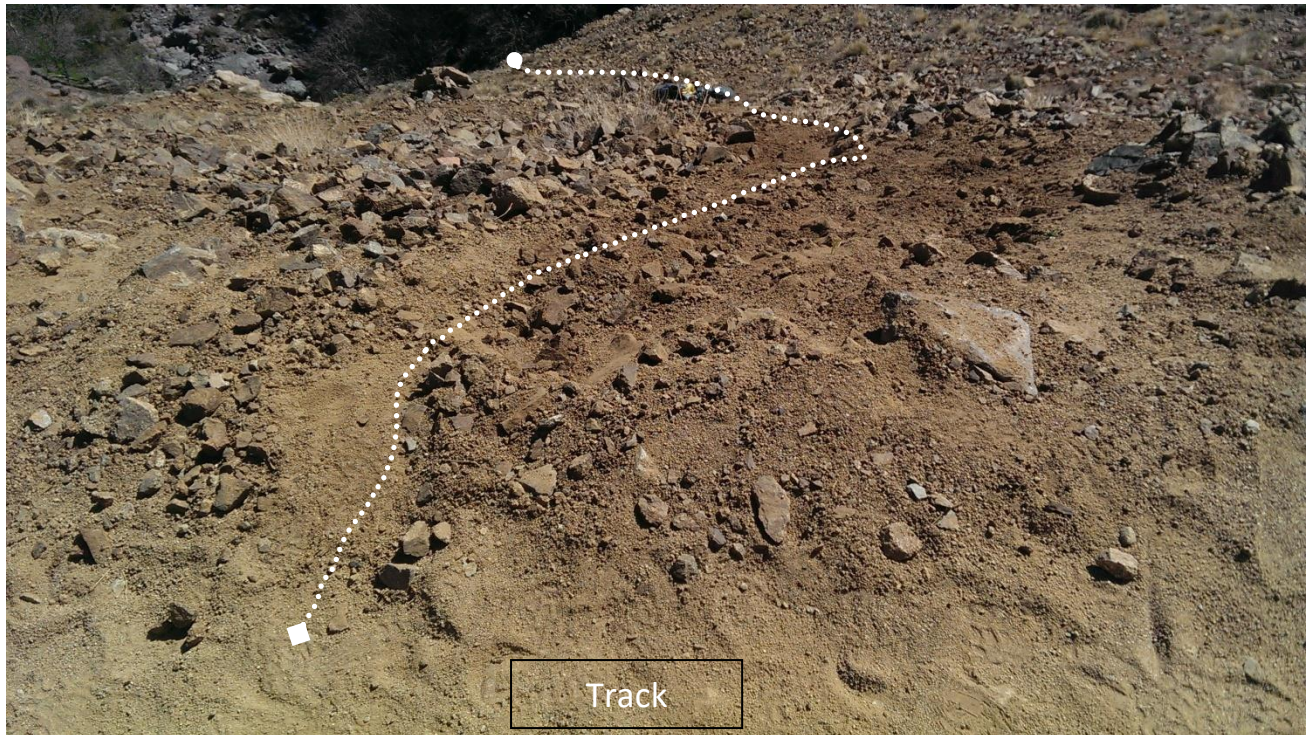
Alternative narratives might choose to recognise the extent to which mules are brutalised and abused by local people with little or no training in animal communication and care and the extent to which this is true. Communicating with mules by means of a traditional bit does not imply that local people mistreat their mules. There are too many counter examples showing that there are many locals who do not abuse the bit, have even abandoned it and enjoy a good relationship with their mules. It is, furthermore worth noting that, over 100 years, Cunninghame-Graham was of the opinion that Moroccans possessed “a community of feeling which I have never seen in any other land” (1898, p. 188). He argued that in Morocco the domestic animals and man understand each other better than in any other country he has visited. He bemoans the ways in which domestic animals are treated in the UK (the ridiculously cropped and docked hunters, the capitalistic looking carriage horses), bemoaning too the ways in which animals have been turned into production machines back home (p. 189). He also wonders why a flock of sheep follows an Arab but is driven by a European. This highlights the industrialisation of the human-non-human relationship that was occurring in the UK at the time of his writing and the relative freedom from such mechanisation that can be found in Morocco. I suspect Cunninghame-Graham’s observations say more about his disquiet with British practices than they do about Moroccan ones. There may even be a somewhat romanticised view of life in Morocco. Sheep and goats are certainly driven using stones in Morocco as is emphasised by the proverbs about a sheep jumping to avoid the stone thrown with pinpoint accuracy by its master, only to guess wrong and be hit in the head.

Attending to the bit, to the material messages it transmits to the mule and fails to transmit to the muleteer, allows us to see that the bit is not an organ of loving attention. Attending to its brutal efficiency and insensitivity, we see how it, in turn, produces a brutal insensitive handler who sees neither the suffering nor the damage done to their relationship, nor the need for an alternative. Attention here is to the *I-in-Me* and the *I-in-It* where the *It* is the mule, the bit and the work to be done. In essence, the traditional bit makes it difficult to open to the other, to dialogue and establish a relationship based on mutual trust, respect and affection.



Figures 5.11a-5.11b: The mule's fall ended in the river bed below the waterfalls above Imlil that countless thousands of tourists visit every summer. As ever the pack saddle conceals, rendering invisible, the reality underneath: her abdomen had ruptured on impact and her intestines were floating in the water. The cause of her fall is also hidden from those who cannot see beyond the human story to the mule story and the mule's lived reality.





Figures 5.11c-5.11d: The mule started backing away from the bit down the stony slope away from the edge of the track before throwing herself backwards and tumbling over the cliff side and down into the river below.



5.1.7 *Attending to alternatives and what they might presence*

The only alternative to the traditional bit available in Imlil has, historically, been the curb bit provided through bit swapping clinics by the animal welfare charity, SPANA (Harry, 2013). Working within the limitations of a monthly visit to Imlil and without experts in equine behaviour, ground work, training and riding, it is perhaps unsurprising that there has been a focus on bit swapping.

Bit swapping is a simple, unimaginative, one-size-fits-all-solution that can deliver incremental improvements. It fails, however, to transform the situation. Replacing one bit for another assumes that the problem lies with the bit and that replacing a medieval device with a modern (more humane) device will solve 'the problem'. The intervention can claim success without subjecting the underlying assumption(s) and diagnosis to critical evaluation. There is a failure to 'look upstream' (Bortoft, 2012) to ascertain where the problem appears.

One of the SPANA vets, was led to understand from her team that "a mule that has had a traditional bit in its mouth for five or six years will not respond when a stainless-steel bit is used"¹⁶⁴. According to the same vet "horsemanship skills take years to learn". She did not think "vets ... learnt about saddles or bits ... this was something she had learnt as a rider"¹⁶⁵. This lack of awareness or 'downloading' (Scharmer, 2009) coupled with the limited contact time their teams have with locals, makes it difficult for this charity to do more than provide alternative bits and a certain amount of advice on biting and riding. Unfortunately, this also means that the alternative equipment supplied is not used effectively and is often deemed ineffective. One of the reason for this is the way the curb bit is mounted in the local bridle, a single cheek piece with sufficient movement at its extremity to cancel out the curb action. The bit therefore produces little in the way of poll pressure; its action is therefore negated, rendering it less effective. Another reason is that the bit cannot be used as a substitute for a lack of awareness and understanding of good mulemanship. Similarly, the bit does not address the assumption that a mule needs to be controlled rather than communicated with. And, when the alternative is not

¹⁶⁴ Field Notes 12, pages 14-15 (2nd May, 2014).

¹⁶⁵ Field Notes 12, page 15 (2nd May, 2014).

readily available¹⁶⁶ or is deemed ineffective, the status quo is perpetuated with owners falling back into their one truth, thereby absencing themselves.

The assumption that the answer to the traditional bit is to replace it with another mechanical device thus obscures a host of alternative truths and narratives, including those offered by head collars and training in animal communication and handling. The focus on the bit appears to have made it difficult for attention to be redirected to the underlying relationship between the mule and her handler. Seeing with fresh eyes involves suspending patterns of the past and redirecting our attention to what lies upstream (Scharmer, 2009). Focussing on the bit rather than on the relationship means that the bit is changed rather than the relationship. Relationships founded on control rather than communication are not addressed, they are absenced. It also means that those mules and owners who communicate well with their mules are not offered the training and equipment that would help them develop their practice to a higher level (presencing a latent potential). This would of course require a change in perspective and in strategy; sadly, individuals and organisations are often reluctant to evaluate and rethink the ways in which they operate.

My own awareness of the need to prototype alternatives led me to seek out opportunities. It was during a further trek with Brahim, in September 2014, that I first attempted to intervene and crystallise the vision and intention I had for improving this aspect of mule welfare. Accompanied by Hamish, a British vet, we set out to complete a traverse of the Aksoual ridge, taking Hassan and his mule with us, in order to camp high up on the Tizi n Tarharat (3460m). On this occasion we met up the evening before an early morning departure. Arriving at the gîte, Hamish and I found Hassan's mule tethered up outside.

The mule was tethered using the rope bracelet. Shortly after we arrived, Hassan asked me to remove the saddle blanket and handed me the blue plastic brush we had given him. When I took the *burdah* off, I found the mule quite sweaty and identified two sores – one on either side of the chest. ¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ Modern bits are only available when SPANA make their once-a-month visit to Imlil and an owner presents himself and is willing to surrender their traditional bit. In many cases, there are no curb bits available. In other cases, the owner is away working on the day of the visit and never gets the opportunity to swap their bit.

¹⁶⁷ Field Notes 21, page 11 (16th September, 2014).



Figure 5.12a: Hassan's mule is tethered using a humane tether beside the gîte, in Tachedirt. Her back is still sweated up and she is eating straw from the floor. She wears a simple rope head collar over her head that is left on continuously.



Figures 5.12b-5.12c: The sweat over our mule's back and ribs follows the form of the pack saddle and hides a pressure sore over the highest point of the chest wall on either side (arrows).



Attending means being trusted to look. Hassan's openness to exploring alternative practices together was therefore an invitation. I was pleased to see Hassan using the humane tether (Figure 15.12a) and disappointed to see the saddle sores that had arisen through inattention to the development of a pressure point and a resulting pressure sore (Figures 5.12b-5.12c). Two steps forward, one step back. Change was not impossible but changing the tethering practices was easy¹⁶⁸ compared with the challenge of getting muleteers to work their mules in head collars. Hassan, you see, was still working his mule in a traditional bit and there was nothing I could do about it. I had no other muleteer available, no head collar for him to use (even though he expressed a desire to purchase one) and was not bold enough to insist that he work his mule the next day in the rope head collar she had over her head. These locally made head collars are common and there were a small number of people in the valley working their mules in these. Hassan, however, was not one of them! The challenge for me lay in working out how I could ask Hassan to let go of his cynicism and fears and explore what it might be like to work his mule without a bit.

The following day, we climbed steeply to the Tizi Likemt (3555m) where we left Hassan and his mule. Travelling apart from the mules is normal practice in Moroccan mountain tourism, making it difficult to attend to the mule, let alone the bit. We nevertheless saw our mule walking, high above us, with her mouth open (Figure 5.12d). At such distances, it is hard to know what she might be experiencing, the unnatural mouth carriage was recognisable to me though as was the unfairness of being able to eat and drink at the col, whilst she stood with her bit in her mouth (Figure 5.12e).

¹⁶⁸ It should be noted that the existing tethering practices are deeply ingrained in local culture and, as mentioned previously, can be traced back over a century.

We camped that night at altitude and woke the next day ready to head back down to the valley floor. That meant a descent of a steep couloir from the Tizi n Tarharat (Figures 5.13a-5.13b).

The descent from the col was surprisingly steep and rocky. I was struck by how sure-footed our mule was – over some quite exposed ground. Both Brahim and Hassan were paying considerable attention to her and Hassan on several occasions provided her with a brake – taking her tail and leaning back.¹⁶⁹

It was becoming increasingly evident to me that Hassan and other local muleteers preferred to work their mules from behind and I was convinced that there was absolutely no need for the mule to be worked in a bit at all. Accordingly, I asked for it to be removed (Figures 5.13c-5.13e). The mule then showed what the bit had made absent – her desire to eat along the way and her ability to reliably follow the path.

A microcosm of change had thus been trialled. In starting to explore the arguments offered up against working a mule in a head collar rather than with a bit in her mouth, a process of generative dialogue emerged that allowed alternatives to be explored and discussed¹⁷⁰.

¹⁶⁹ Field Notes 21, page 15 (18th September, 2014)

¹⁷⁰ My experiences taught me that judgement got in the way of me understanding others and their own World views. It prevented me seeing what I needed to see and made it difficult to empathise with and come alongside those I wanted to help. My Voice of Judgement was therefore a factor that I needed to address to be able to conduct the co-sensing journeys that give rise to a safe space (Brown, 2015, pp. 230-232; Griffiths 2003; Scharmer, 2009, pp. 187-188) for dialogue. This realisation helped me appreciate the subtle but important difference between *researching on* and *researching with*.



Figures 5.12d-5.12e: Above us, Hassan's mule walks with her mouth held open. This unnatural head posture suggests she is in discomfort. Below, on reaching the Tizi, we all stop, take our rucksacks off, have a drink and a little food, all except the mule of course who is left to stand fully loaded with her bit in her mouth.





Figures 5.13a-5.13b: The steep descent down the rock-strewn couloir that drops from the Tizi n Tarharart to Sidi Chamharouch is challenging terrain but the muleteer's preference, even here, is to stay behind. At this point the mule is still being worked with the bit in her mouth.





Figures 5.13c-5.13d: Free from the bit, Hassan's mule makes her way down the steep mule path snatching food at intervals. Hassan stayed behind her. The mule's experience was very different to what she would normally have experienced for she availed herself of grazing opportunities throughout the descent.





Figure 5.13e: The mule's bit hangs around her neck, leaving her free to snatch mouthfuls of grass and walk on, chewing as she walked.

5.1.8 *Attending to my responses to bit abuse*

The time I spent living and working in Imlil, exposed me to the daily suffering of mules. The tragedies I witnessed were harrowing and left me feeling sad, traumatised, angry and perplexed (Figures 5.11a-5.11b). This emotional overload could easily give rise to anger-fuelled judgements and I had to teach myself to be alert to these as they risked shutting down the curiosity and dialogue needed to explore the collective phenomenon that lay in front of me. The wholehearted journey is about moving from judgement to curiosity (Brown, 2015, pp. 52-53). It's about recognising and getting curious about our emotions so that they no longer own and define us: "we attempt to disown our difficult stories to appear more whole or more acceptable, but our wholeness – even our wholeheartedness – actually depends on the integration of all our experiences, including our falls" (Brown, 2015, p. 43).

Seeing animal suffering can easily give rise to a desire to blame those responsible; this creates a them-and-us dichotomy. By contrast, co-sensing journeys allow awareness of the underlying causes to be developed without any finger pointing or blaming. I was learning the importance of facilitating the co-seeing and co-sensing journey so that people can make sense of what is going on in the wider surrounding ecosystem.

Attending to the bit provides a focus for these journeys; it is possible to attend too much to the bit, however. Attending to my responses to the suffering mediated by the traditional bit allowed me to (re)direct attention more effectively. This involved letting go of my attachment to ideas of what should be and opening to in-the-moment possibility.

Being with the way things are calls for an expansion of ourselves. We start from what is, not from what should be; we encompass contradictions, painful feelings, fears and imaginings, and without fleeing, blaming or attempting correction – we learn to soar, like the far-seeing hawk, over the whole landscape. The practice of being with the way things are allows us to alight in a place of openness, where "the truth" readies us for the next step, and the sky opens up. (Zander and Zander, 2000, p. 111)

This certainly did not come easily. Over time self-reflection allowed me to see my own contribution was not always helping people to co-see and co-sense. My anger and frustration made it difficult for those who felt blamed to see and explore the options available to them. I thus came to develop an awareness of my role as action researcher and facilitator of change and the importance of creating safe spaces in which co-sensing journeys could be undertaken.

5.2 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the welfares enacted through the traditional bit. Attending to the relationships that the bit enacts allows us to appreciate how the bit transmits messages and the directive, monological nature of those messages, how it renders a mule compliant, productive and invisible! Designed, made and used by man to direct and control, it is a telling device, not a listening device. It supports the status quo, imposing and sustaining a singular narrative. This both limits and determines how mules and mule welfare are known.

Mol (2002, p. 31) shows that, by foregrounding the “instruments that unveil the hidden reality of atherosclerosis”, an atherosclerosis is enacted that is entirely dependent on the microscope. I have similarly shown that the instrument that is the bit, enacts a man-mule dyad and the welfare contingent on that one-sided relationship. I have furthermore shown how the bit enacts unequal exploitative relationships in which downloading (Scharmer, 2009) and the abuse of power deny mules the right to reply, eat and drink (Enoff, 2014). By attending to that which the traditional bit brings into being, it is possible to understand how its brutal efficiency and insensitivity can render those who use it inattentive, insensitive and even brutal. Possible too to understand the nature of the relationship between mule and muleteer that the bit creates through its redistribution of power. Power does not necessarily corrupt but it can be abused where humility and integrity are lacking (McManus, 2004, p.67). In cultures where we value task accomplishment over relationship building, the “culture of do and tell” dominates and we fail to inquire humbly of the other (Schein, 2013, pp. 53-67) and fail to see that with great power comes great responsibility.

By attending to the ways in which the effects of the bit are concealed and absented (Scharmer, 2009) and the attending practices (oral examination, photography, empathic listening, etc) that are required to counter this, it is possible to trace how narratives about the bit are constructed (including their origins) and can be reimagined. Shifting focus from task to relationality, from ends to means, from ego to eco, allows other mules and welfares to be enacted. The next chapter will explore more radically different ways of attending to a mule, ways founded on dialogue and embodied attention.

DIALOGUE WITH BELLA

Turning from the Bit to the Between

***I-Thou** moments consist not of two experiences dwelling distinctly in two persons but of a third dimension, the dimension of “the between”, in which shared experience enlivens the I-Thou relationship.*

Kenneth Paul Kramer¹⁷¹

¹⁷¹ Kramer (2003, p. 24)

6.1 *Attending to the Between*

If the bit is a monological device... If, in mediating the relationship, the bit brings forth an *It* (the objectified and exploited mule) and an *I-It*: the less-than-human muleteer... If “the development of the function of experiencing and using is mostly through a reduction in the power of relationship” (Buber, 2000, p. 45¹⁷².... What happens when we attend to and foreground relationships? How, returning to my core research questions can we turn aside from the trodden path of *I-It* and explore alternative pathways that lead us to really¹⁷³ know, care and take responsibility for the mule? What, in short, does it take for the *I* to refuse to affirm the *It* and, instead, affirm the *Thou*? I argue in this chapter that genuine relationships privilege attentive listening and reciprocity and that their communication devices would be co-designed and co-created rather than imposed unilaterally. Where the previous chapter explored knowing through the bit, this chapter explores the mules and welfares that emerge when we know through dialogue.

For Buber, turning to dialogue, to genuine meeting is the central relational event (Kramer, 2003, p. 162). He asserts that “all real living is meeting ... because genuine meeting requires an altogether different kind of attentiveness – a living relationship of whole person to whole person” (Kramer, 2003, p. 22). How, if this is so, should we attend to the other if we are to genuinely meet, not just them but ourselves? The answer offered by Buber is to focus on the dimension of “the between”.

The between occurs when one turns to the other and enters into undivided relationships. ... “the between” is relational space ever and again reconstituted in our meetings with others and ever and again establishing genuine dialogue and genuine community. (Kramer, 2003, p. 78)

Where the previous chapter focussed on the bit, this chapter attends to the between, focussing on that which emerges when mule and human meet and engage in dialogue. In doing so, it explores two different ways of knowing. The first arises from mismetings and a turning towards wilful selfishness and individuality; the second arises from genuine meeting and a turning towards relationship. This turning, this

¹⁷² Buber emphasises that “both modes of speaking are necessary” for “our lives in the world benefit in practical ways because of *I-It* relations” but “developing personal wholeness requires *I-Thou* relationships” (Kramer, 2003, p. 16)

¹⁷³ Here, 'really' is understood to mean 'to know as fully and richly as possible... it invites multiplicity.

opening is born of movement; it crosses an inner threshold, one that recurs in each present moment, one that is defined by our quality of attention¹⁷⁴ and defines in turn the quality of our relationship(s). I argue that it is in attending to the between that we can start to see how mule welfare is enacted and where different versions of welfare originate from.

Attending to this movement and the embodied knowing that emerges when meeting and engaging a mule in dialogue is the focus of this chapter. By attending to the “between” in an embodied sense, I seek to develop an awareness of what it is to know, care and take responsibility for the mule, one’s mule; in this case, my mule. I do this by attending to that which emerges through meeting, mutual reciprocity and dialogue (Buber, 2000; Scharmer, 2009), movement (Buller, 2012; Ingold, 2011), both physical and attitudinal, and through embodied awareness (Birke and Brandt, 2009; Birke and Hockenhull, 2015; Game, 2001; Smith, 2011). I do this by ‘respecting’ the between as only the eye that is the camera can:

I’m an eye. A mechanical eye. I, the machine, show you a world the way only I can see it. I free myself for today and forever from human immobility. I’m in constant movement. I approach and pull away from objects. I creep under them. I move alongside a running horse’s mouth. I fall and rise with the falling and rising bodies. This is I, the machine, manoeuvring in the chaotic movements, recording one movement after another...
(Berger, 1972, p. 17)

The eye thus attends to the I, the *I-It* and *I-Thou* and the movements that allow us to know the mule.

¹⁷⁴ The *I-It* and the *I-Thou* are ever present as alternating primal “attitudes” or “ways of speaking” (Kramer, 2003, p. 16).

6.2 Meeting 'Tachnit'.

My second trek with Hassan's mule left me with many questions to ask of a mule. The opportunity to explore how a mule could be trained and worked dialogically rather than monologically soon materialised. A *Tachnit*, or young mule, had been purchased by a local establishment for 8000 MAD¹⁷⁵, from a souk about 50 km to the west of Amizmiz and transported back to Imlil. She was approximately four years old, unnamed, untrained and with no scarring to her legs. She was a 'blank canvas' (Scharmer, 2009; Scharmer and Kaeufer, 2010).

This moment was the turning point at which the project shifted from understanding muleteering practice and promoting awareness of welfare issues associated with the traditional bit, local tethering practices and overloading to creating something quite different. In meeting this young mule, I was offered the opportunity to craft with her a different life from that she would have had. This was an opportunity to 'prototype' (Scharmer, 2009) a different type of relationship. In this relationship compulsion and the use of force were rejected outright from the start, forsaken too the unnatural and inhuman denial of movement, mobility and indeed agency (Buller, 2012, p. 144) born of practices of confinement and restraint. There would be no tethers or hobbles, no *gamou* (bits), no *akouray* (sticks) or ear twisting; the relationship was to be stripped bare of these tools of domination and control. This decision introduced an element of uncertainty and therefore vulnerability (Brown, 2015, pp. 52-54; Kramer, 2003, pp. 33, 46, 167-169) into the relationship as we each let go of our assumptions and were present to each other, willing to be surprised and changed. We crossed the threshold together and together we faced and overcame the challenges our journey threw at us. We learnt to attend to each other and were able to create a negotiated bond based on trust, understanding and genuine dialogue (Buber, 2000; Kramer, 2003, p. 33).

This chapter is therefore an account of the meetings (presencings) and mismetings (absencings) that marked our journey together. It is an account too of this mule's ability to frustrate me, to challenge me to listen both to her and to myself, to see, exercise my curiosity and to change; an ability given free rein by my decision never to deny her 'her

¹⁷⁵ 8000 Moroccan Dirhams (MAD) is equivalent to about 800 €. A further 300 MAD had been paid to transport her back to Imlil.

voice' and her ability to say 'No'. It is an account of the embodied learning I experienced as I learnt to 'co-sense' and 'co-create' (Scharmer, 2009) with this young mule. *Co-sensing* always leads to questions and the questions we uncovered together were as pertinent as the questions asked by Ballam's donkey after he is unjustly hit three times by his unseeing master.

Then the LORD opened the donkey's mouth, and it said to Balaam,
What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?¹⁷⁶

These questions lead us to re-examine what we see and do not see: In my own case, I was afforded the opportunity to question how my intentions aligned with my actions; this had implications for my inquiry into my own practice and that of others. I learnt to recognise that I needed help to suspend my own judgements and expectations and to see afresh. It was this realisation that led to me seeking out Ellen, whose ability to listen to and dialogue with equines has been honed into an art form. In November 2014, the two-of-us therefore became the three of us. Our journey together served as a lightening conductor, drawing out the knowledge, assumptions, beliefs and emotions of the mule's owners and handlers and opened discussions both at home and within the community on how a mule should be viewed, trained and worked.

The following account explores the U journey and

- (i) how dialogue was initiated and genuine dialogue was further cultivated¹⁷⁷ through co-sensing journeys undertaken together.
- (ii) how we came to co-create a relationship and practices based on trust, understanding, mutuality, respect and dialogue.
- (iii) how we created a safe holding space in which to do this work.
- (iv) Where dialogue was not established and the lessons emerging from such mis-meetings.
- (v) How embodying this relationship contributed to wider discussions about the basis for a good relationship between man and mule.

¹⁷⁶ Balaam's Donkey in the Bible, New International Version, Numbers 22: 21-39

6.3 *Initiating dialogue*

Our first meeting was tentative and exploratory:

She was a little nervous when I approached ... I was able to touch her shoulder without there being any reaction. I then ran my hand down her back and she gave a little buck when it ran past the withers. With some shaping work, I found that I was able to run my hand further and further down her back until she was happy for my hand to rest on her rump without there being any objection.

I explained the 'shaping' concept ... how we try to expand her comfort zone ... that the least menacing point to approach her was the shoulder and that we needed to explore what she is comfortable with.¹⁷⁸

Our meeting was two-sided, respectful. Berger (1972, p. 9) emphasises the dialogical nature of encounter when he says that "the reciprocal nature of vision is more fundamental than that of spoken dialogue". We exchanged looks, not words (Figure 6.1a). We looked and looked again. We 'respected' the other. We did not presume to know each other, seeking instead to attend to and know the thou. There was mutual reciprocity, presence without agendas - we simply made ourselves available, allowing things to unfold as we attended to each other by means of our proximity, curiosity and openness. The embodiment of our mutuality allowed us to know whether and to what extent we accepted each other. Had I determined that our meeting was the moment to examine her teeth or remove the broken tether from her hindleg (Figure 6.1b), had I imposed myself on her, without asking her whether she chose to enter the relationship, things would have been different. To do so, would have been to privilege the *I-It*. Instead, we chose *I-Thou* even if it only lasted until my hand failed to attend and she bucked. The quality of the 'between' is thus honoured.

I emphasise the complete 'letting go' (Scharmer, 2009, 184-185 and 399-401; Kramer, 2003, p. 102-103) required for such a meeting. The act of turning away from personal wilfulness and toward relationship is crucial to the initiation of dialogue. It represents a surrender¹⁷⁹, a willingness to allow the future to emerge. As such, there is no pre-existing subjectivity. The meeting is not conceived here as an encounter between individuals whose actions and interactions – or “playful associations” (Jerolmack, 2009, p. 387) - can be assigned a

¹⁷⁸ Field Notes 21, page 21 (19th September, 2014)

¹⁷⁹ The term 'surrender' translates Buber's term 'passion'.

multiplicity of intersubjective meanings that can then be compared. Entering into dialogue means letting go of such intentionality and attending to the other. This is the realm of the between, where our attention will be focussed.

The next morning, we did not meet so well. My attention strayed from her onto other concerns; I thus tripped unwittingly on the threshold between *I-It* and *I-Thou*. I was absent, not present. This was a "mind the step" moment:

Tachnit had allowed herself to be led up a series of steps into the hotel garden and, once there, was keen to stay.

Getting her back down the steps was impossible!! No matter how much I tempted and cajoled her, she would not place more than her forefeet on the second from top step. She refused to budge any further. Any attempt to push or pull her (with a rope round her bottom) just made things worse. One of the staff tried lifting her feet and placing them lower down – and had to be told that this would never work as she had not decided to move. I started to think I had been too bold and would now be seen not to have the answers. I did not want to leave them with this problem.¹⁸⁰

She was not supposed to be in the garden. The garden is all flowers and water features. It is for the guests. I was aware we should not be there. She did not share that awareness or understanding, neither did she share my desire to return her back to the cold and grassless underworld from which she had come. I struggled to let go of my personal wilfulness and turn fully to her. I had some awareness of the problem and of the need to rethink the situation, but I did not know how to be present. Operating in the World of *I-It*, I therefore sought a logical solution:

How was I going to change her mind? Then the answer came – she needed to follow a friend. **K** acted on my request and asked **D** to bring his own mule to the bottom of the steps. Seeing her there, the young mule almost pelted down the steps. I had a job keeping her to a walk.¹⁸¹

And this set the pattern for our learning together. The mule said 'No!', she refused, she ignored what I thought were quite reasonable requests, she was awkward, difficult stubborn.

¹⁸⁰ Field Notes 21, page 22 (20th September, 2014)

¹⁸¹ Field Notes 21, page 22 (20th September, 2014)

No!... No?... Those are my words. Those are the interpretations that flow from a human who, when confronted with a mule, does not provide the mule with the space, time and opportunity to express themselves. My 'requests' were human requests or, as Game (2001, p. 1) argues, "human-centred questions".

This mule's refusal challenged me to let go of what I thought 'reasonable', to let go of my agenda and see things from her perspective. I needed to hear her 'Yes' where I heard a 'No'. She was inviting me not to force her over the threshold but to ask her to step over it with me. She was asking me to take her needs, feelings and preferences into account, asking me to listen not to my narrative(s) but to hers. She was challenging me to step out of my bubble to allow myself to see and witness her as an essential self (Scharmer, 2009, pp. 179-180). And, in challenging me to attend more fully to her, she was helping develop my awareness of my intentions and of how my actions aligned with them. I was thus challenged to listen to her questions rather than focus on my own. As Merrifield (2008, p. 30) argues of donkeys, they challenge you to be patient, to listen to "*speak correctement*", helping us appreciate that (p. 40) we don't see things as they are but as we are. How I was seeing determined what I saw (Rohr, 2016, p. 63).

Being present with *Tachnit* meant, among other things, respecting her, not fearing her. We therefore had to work out what we needed to achieve a listening space ... the kind in which there are no distractions and we could dialogue; the kind of space too, perhaps, where we would be able to critically reflect on our practice through being rather than doing.

I am not suggesting that we engaged in critical reflection together but that she was there "in the arena" with me; she was not a spectator in the stands but someone whose face was marked by dust and sweat, much as mine¹⁸². The trust, respect and understanding we achieved were thus won in the moments we were present to each other, won through dialogue and not through the use of force and abuse of power.

¹⁸² This is a reference to Theodore Roosevelt's speech "Citizenship In A Republic", delivered at the Sorbonne, in Paris, France on 23 April, 1910, in which he proposes that: "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

A Note to the Reader

The following images bridge what John Berger describes as “the abyss between the moment recorded and the moment of looking” (1982, p. 91). Conscious of this abyss, I invoke Buber’s invitation to read dialogically and imaginatively (Kramer, 2003, p. 9). I ask you to enter into active give-and-take dialogue with these images as you develop your own awareness of the unique in-the-moment experience of what can emerge between mule and human when they engage in genuine meeting.

The images capture our meetings and mismetings. In doing so, *I-Thou* and *I-It* moments are juxtaposed and shared. These moments are, however, experiential, unique, indescribable and therefore prone to ambiguity. They are hard to share.

In Berger’s essay on appearances¹⁸³, he presents an image of a horse and a man (1982, p. 87) and says of it “the photograph offers irrefutable evidence that this man, this horse and this bridle existed. Yet it tells us nothing of the significance of their existence” (1982, p. 88). Elsewhere he asserts (p. 98) that “photographs do not translate from appearances. They quote from them.”

The images you have already seen and are about to see look at the significance of what lies between the mule, the human and their tools of communication. Please look at them. Please feel your way into them, developing an embodied awareness of the emotional states of those involved. Do not think about them.

I ask you to attend to these images and to the past and future we must lend to these images for them to become meaningful. I ask you to be mindful of what makes the between meaningful:

Without a story, without an unfolding, there is no meaning. Facts, information, do not themselves constitute meaning. ... when we give meaning to an event, that meaning is a response not to the known, but also to the unknown: Meaning and mystery are inseparable, and neither can exist without the passing of time. Certainty may be instantaneous; doubt requires duration; meaning is born of the two. (Berger, 1982, p. 91)

Through images and, subsequently through my interpretation of those images in words, I will attempt to capture some of the meaning and mystery of my dialogue with *Tachnit*.

¹⁸³ In Berger and Mohr (1982) *Another way of telling: A possible theory of photography*.



Figure 6.1a: First meeting: The young mule fixes her attention on me; I, in turn, attend to and photograph her. We are curious, interested in each other. I ask nothing of her other, watching her and her response as she is groomed.



Figures 6.1b-6.1c: Exchanging shackles for dialogue: A broken hobble on Tachnit's left hindleg bears witness to the common practice of tying front and back legs together to restrict the movement of young mules. On her head, a lead rope had been stitched into a simple head collar.



Figures 6.1d-6.1e: Our first encounter sees me explore what she is happy for me to do. I pay close attention to her muscle tension and to her tail movement, attending closely to any sign that she is stressed. This eventually builds up to my running a hand down her back leg. It is this that allows me to free the broken hobble.

6.4 *Co-sensing journeys*

Co-sensing journeys build awareness of the other's world map, providing opportunities for listening and for us to attend to the quality of our listening. What emerges from the following account is an awareness of the turn towards and away from the other.

Turning towards implies opening to the other and intentionally respecting the primacy of the relationship. Turning away implies a loss of attention.

The emergent nature of the between was inevitably messy for it was born of the experiential U-journeys we undertook together, journeys whose outcomes were emergent and unpredictable. Early U-journeys with *Tachnit* saw us progress from initiating dialogue to ground work¹⁸⁴ and onto riding. This meant communicating and working together in different situations and under varying circumstances. Each day presented new challenges with learning progressing fast at times only to then plateau. Where dialogue broke down it became clear that, in advancing towards a vague goal the step we had taken, was too large, taking us away from *Tachnit* and causing us to lose sight of each other. The objective thus came between us, where it needed to take shape before us and be defined by us.

6.4.1 *Mismeetings*

Mismeetings were common features of the co-sensing journeys undertaken in the early days. Learning from them was important in order to meet genuinely: When visiting her first thing in the morning, I realised that it was too much to ask to walk into her stable and put her head collar on. She was not comfortable with this, turning her bum toward me. Letting go was required and I redirected my attention to her. She was thirsty and, having been locked indoors for between eight and twelve hours, without water, light or company, was keen to get out and drink. Aligning our intentions thus came to mean opening the door, waiting for her to come to me before putting on her head collar and walking with her to the water trough. I wanted her to recognise that it was comfortable to be with me (Marks, 2002, p. 28) and to choose to be with me.

¹⁸⁴ According to Kelly Marks (2002, p. 59), "All the most respected schools of horsemanship ... have known that the starting point for most remedial horses is with the handler working him initially from the ground".

I was open to her and aware that when her needs were not respected, she would make her feelings known to those willing and able to listen:

The young mule was still locked in her stable. I let her out and the first thing she did was to go for a long drink from the water trough. She was clearly very thirsty! I can't blame her given that she was probably as much as 18 hours without access to water. She was also a little bit grumpy and barged me when, after a few pieces, I refused to feed her the rest of the apple I had in my hand. There was even a small buck. At the time, I was a little annoyed but on reflection I can see that it was her pent-up frustration.

...

When the staff finally turned up, I asked them why the young mule had been left in the dark and without water all morning. One of them let her out of her small compound and she spent the next ten minutes or so charging around like a lunatic. She appeared to be really enjoying the freedom and space that had been denied to her all morning.¹⁸⁵

In North Africa, equines have long been required to wait patiently for their master and are typically not watered until the afternoon (Abd el-Kader and Daumas, 2008, pp. 152, 178), thereby developing their ability to withstand the hardships imposed by their master¹⁸⁶. That is not to say, however, that this is entirely born of cruelty and brutality; we must remember that the harsh life of the desert nomad (Thesiger, 2007) that gives rise to 'les mœurs du désert' is full of contradictions and that the love Arabs bear for the horse reflect these (Abd el-Kader and Daumas, 2008, pp. 95-107)¹⁸⁷. Whilst their practices may be the product of circumstance and necessity, I argue that they are also born of singularity - of a hierarchical way of ordering the world that leaves little room for tyranny to be challenged and reimagined¹⁸⁸. Generative dialogue, by contrast, offers new possibilities for neither the objectives nor the outcomes are predetermined. My

¹⁸⁵ Field Notes 23, pages 1-2 (31st October, 2014).

¹⁸⁶ It should be noted that the communities I was working with whilst, having very similar practices to their nomadic cousins, are sedentary and at peace.

¹⁸⁷ *Les mœurs du désert* (the moral code of the desert) is the subtitle of Daumas's 19th century classic work on Arab equestrianism in North Africa. It captures the significant contribution made by the desert environment and the warring, nomadic (and to a lesser extent pastoral) way of life of the tribes living there to the relationship they had with their horses. The contradictions listed include greed and generosity, savageness and civility. Desert life is unbearable and yet brings out the virtues of courage, loyalty and rectitude (p. 45)

¹⁸⁸ The fatalism that characterises such societies is a significant factor in the absence of such challenges.

focus here is therefore on the (e)quality of the between. Intentions in action thus emerge out of ongoing interaction (Tollefsen and Dale, 2012). According to Fantasia et al (2014, p. 14), the minimum requirement is that interactors share an interactional space and cooperate in sense making, forming goals and purposes together while interacting.

Mismeetings taught me to anticipate (and imagine¹⁸⁹) what might upset her. This was needed to avoid potentially difficult or even dangerous situations but also because such mismeetings were not productive, they reinforced existing positions and implied a turning inwards, whereas meeting implies a turning away from wilfulness toward the other; this must be learnt by both parties.

The drive to secure and consume food could give rise to wilful self-interest for Tachnit. On one occasion she was persuaded back into her enclosure with an offering of oats¹⁹⁰:

When she eventually came down the steps, I placed the bucket on the floor for her. She started bucking, catching me on the back of the fingers, where they were resting over my upper right leg. We ... retrieved the bucket with a long-handled rubber scraper – from the safety of the steps. I did not get angry with her or feel anger towards her. I just pointed out that this would be another area in which we would need to invest time and effort, so she feels comfortable with us being around her food.¹⁹¹

This represents a mismeeting, a turning away from me and towards food; it was something I needed to guard against. The daily challenges thrown up by her socialisation and training thus helped develop our awareness of how she attended, of her availability. She, in turn, became aware of when we were available to her. This emphasis on our attitudes towards each other is part of an embodied approach to cooperation that recognises that the enactive perspective involves “cooperative interaction before communicative abilities are achieved” (Fantasia et al, 2014, p. 874).

Focussing on the other and not on objectives, taught me to give her time to decide to take on certain challenges. This involved me reading her carefully so that I was aware of when I was pushing her into the stretch zone and potentially asking too much of her.

¹⁸⁹ Kelly Marks proposes several useful questions to ask when problems occur including asking yourself how you would go about creating the problem in the first place (2002, pp. 34-35).

¹⁹⁰ See Marks (2002, pp. 47-49 for a discussion of the utility of food in training.

¹⁹¹ Field Notes 23, page 22 (5th November, 2014).

Self-awareness was also required to identify when I had turned away from her and become preoccupied with my own feelings and objectives. Awareness of the turn away and of the turn towards are crucial, providing insights into one's attitude. Experiencing this "double act of turning" (Kramer, 2003, pp. 156-177)¹⁹², this inner movement and its outer manifestations and consequences helped me acquire awareness of the subtle difference between *I-It* and *I-Thou* ways of relating and communicating.

The hairpin bend in the path down to the village was just such a challenge. She did not like it and was unwilling to follow the bend through. She was challenged to navigate the turn, we were challenged to understand her and patiently rethink and represent the challenge. Staying present to each other was difficult, however, when failure lured us into absencing. Finding ourselves stuck, like some broken down lorry, blocking the High Street, I felt my stress levels rising as I became conscious of the pile of people who we were holding up. I was to experience absencing many times, only coming to recognise it as such much later:

This morning I took the young mule down to the village. It was a disastrous experience. She refused to move forwards all over the place and I lost my patience with her several times. She often took her food and then stopped moving forwards altogether. It was most frustrating. I tried all the usual tricks including turning her, reversing her and tempting her with various items and pulling on her lead rope. I was soon running out of bread and having to resort to brown walnut leaves. I tried pulling her upper lip, then her lower lip and sometimes this seemed to produce some forward motion but it was very short-lived. I was very conscious of everyone going past and seeing her 'misbehaving'. I was starting to question why I was not allowing those who wanted to shoo her on (or hit her for that matter) from behind do so.¹⁹³

I was not attending to *Tachnit*. I was not present. My attention was on moving forwards, on objectives, my objectives. I also failed to see that she was attending not to me but to the food in my pocket¹⁹⁴. Absencing is a very real problem, especially when you do not become aware of it in time to interrupt what you are doing and collect yourself:

¹⁹² Turning away from everything that would prevent us from entering into genuine relationship with the other and toward whoever or whatever present itself to us (Kramer, 2003, p. 163).

¹⁹³ Field Notes 25, pages 6-7 (20th December, 2014)

¹⁹⁴ When used properly, food can create positive associations (Marks, 2002, pp. 47-49 and 116-117).

Shortly after the hairpin bend, she again stopped and refused to move forwards. ... After some five minutes or so of frustration, a young girl ... came up behind her. I signalled to [her] to stop and go over the wall but the young girl came on and received a small kick from the mule. She was caught somewhere around her waistline and started crying. She was, however, able to walk and walked away.

One of the men who had been watching then told me that I should have been paying attention. I told him that it was because I had been paying attention that I had told her and signalled to her to move to the side. He said that she was Berber and did not understand this. This just added to my frustration for the fact that she did not understand my words should not have prevented her from understanding the hand signal or from knowing that you don't just walk behind a mule. I felt sad and guilty and angry that this had happened.¹⁹⁵

Had I recognised that we were not dialoguing, that we had turned away from each other, I could have interrupted or discontinued the walk and avoided the incident. This was the low point of our relationship, a veritable mismeeting.

I turned the mule around and then headed back uphill. This took a long time and a lot of pulling. I was trying to allow the release on the lead rope as she moved forwards to reward her. She was stopping and starting. She was taking all the food and biting my fingers. She was being awkward and I confess that I ended up punching her a few times when she refused to move at all.¹⁹⁶

I felt ashamed to have allowed myself to get annoyed with her to the point that I hit her. She too had allowed herself to kick me at times and we both had to learn that this was unnecessary, that this was a dead end on our journey together, one that was not worth exploring.

Gradually, my awareness of how my world view and perceptions affected how I interacted with her grew as I reflected on my ability to be patient, to let go of objectives that I had formed an attachment to, to break down super objectives into attainable, less daunting steps (Marks, 2002, p. 28). I became more curious and imaginative, more able to go with the flow. Confronting my own impatience and inflexibility took time but eventually led to an attitudinal shift. Understanding that the objective of any interaction

¹⁹⁵ Field Notes 25, pages 6-7 (20th December, 2014)

¹⁹⁶ Field Notes 25, pages 6-7 (20th December, 2014)

with her was not immovable but fluid meant that our interactions became much more like a free-flowing dance in which we constantly either attended to each other or failed to do so. For me this meant “letting go” of any attachment I might have to specific possibilities, to agendas. By opening myself up to the *Thou*, by yielding to the moment, to what was ready to emerge when we both privileged the mutual presence that arose between us, I started to experience and learn about a different *I*. I embodied a new way of knowing and caring. I was transformed.

Relation is mutual. My Thou affects me, as I affect it. We are moulded by our pupils and built by our works. The “bad” man lightly touched by the holy primary word, becomes one who reveals. How we are educated by children and by animals. (Buber, 2000, pp. 15-16)

This transformation through mutual presence was evident during an attempted river crossing after heavy rain. I had walked *Tachnit* up the steep mule path above Achayn village, crossing a series of streams that had appeared as the water cascaded from the mountainside above. Opposite the village of Aremd, the river was swollen and running fast. Despite us having never crossed the river when a trickle, I asked her to cross. The objective could have been to get to the other side, in which case, failure was very much an option. There was, however, no predefined objective, they were emergent. She yielded to the pressure on her lead rope and crossed the first part of the river only to refuse to go any further. My urgings did not persuade her to budge an inch¹⁹⁷. I therefore returned to the section we had just crossed and asked her to reverse this. She refused. Still in my own map, I tried moving her side to side, I tried tempting her with pocket treats, I tried leaning into the lead rope so that she felt the pressure come on through her head collar. She refused, as only mules can, to re-enter the water and cross. Staring possible defeat in the face, I experienced an attitudinal shift, seeing not failure (an argument born of the imposition and rejection of my answer) but options (a conversation born of a question and the possibility of a co-created answer). We headed upstream and found a series of smaller crossing points. We entered the water together. My feet fully submerged, I walked her down the stream to the point where she had refused to cross and there exited the stream.

¹⁹⁷ Strictly speaking, we would take one step forwards, two back, then perhaps two forwards, without making any headway.

This was an end we chose together, that came when we let go of what we thought we wanted and attended to each other, allowing something to emerge from the between. Genuine relationship cannot, however, be willed; something else is needed and this, according to Buber is grace.

... the *Thou* meets me through the effective grace of reciprocal acts of compassion. Action and surrender, will and relational grace generate the interactive immediacy of meeting. For Buber, grace is not a theological term but the spontaneously undetermined presence of mutuality, which cannot be activated by will alone. (Kramer, 2003, p. 22)

Letting go can mean many things when seeking to work with a mule. In my case I learnt to relinquish objectives and any tendency I might have not to listen. I had to learn to be present or at least to be aware of when judgement, fear and pride prevented me from being present-in-the-moment and from seeing the whole reality that lay before me. Turning towards and attending to the other leads naturally to a letting go of the desire to control situations. It was, in recognising this that I came to realise that I had to let go of control and make myself vulnerable; it was in this space that trust and dialogue emerged. Countering fear and pride, letting go of control are thus essential parts of the co-sensing journey that lead to generative dialogue and co-creation.

This journey was difficult. I made mistakes. I sometimes went too fast and asked too much. And when this happened, I had to recognise my mistake. In other words, I had to learn humility. In this next extract from my field notes, I build on a successful moment and try to go further, without checking in first with the young mule:

I repeatedly brought her back legs up and then asked Hassan to do the same. To my amazement, he actually succeeded without any problems. I then went too far, letting go of her lead rope whilst taking a back foot on my knee. She moved forwards and kicked me; one kick catching me in the abdomen!¹⁹⁸

The kick was unwelcome, potentially dangerous; the real problem, however, was my failure to listen. In this situation, I needed to let go of any resentment towards the mule, forgive her and admit that I had failed to listen to the subtle clues she had given me that I was asking too much. Deciding to focus my attention on listening more attentively

¹⁹⁸ Field Notes 25, page 12 (22nd December, 2014)

rather than on neutralising the risk of a kick left me better able to dialogue. But how? How was I present to *Tachnit*, how did I come to know her better and come to care for her wellbeing? What happens when judgement is suspended and attention redirected (Scharmer, 2009)? What do we look at (Buller, 2012), to what do we redirect our attention?

Bortoft (1996) and Scharmer (2009) suggest that redirecting out attention from the obvious issue to what lies behind involves going upstream. What did I find upstream? Among other things, I found my attitude(s), intention(s) and emotion(s) and my ability to attend to these and act mindfully, aligning my actions with my intention to forge a respectful, dialogical relationship.

I experienced strong emotional responses, including frustration, fear and anger. Marks (2002, pp. 44-47) emphasises the importance of 'attitude' and the need to analyse where anger comes from to stay calm. I also found judgements (she's stubborn, dangerous and can't be trusted), cynicism (she's never going to learn) and fear (I'm going to get hurt, shown up, proven wrong) or a focus on objectives (it's going really well, we're both doing well, let's keep going¹⁹⁹) getting in the way of listening. And attending to listening, getting curious about it, listening first actively and then obediently, can initiate turning (Kramer, 2003, p. 172).

Refocussing from the bit to the between thus leads us to attend to the quality of communication and relationship. This shift in attention is profoundly significant for attending to the between leads us to ask whether that communication is characterised by reciprocal mutuality and dialogue or one-sided singularity and monologue. This, in turn, gives rise to an awareness of who is present, the *I* born of *I-It* or *I-Thou*.

The account provided so far of some of my early exchanges with *Tachnit* provides a flavour of our mismetings and the glimpses I gained of what it might feel like to meet her genuinely. What I was only dimly aware of was that the *I* present at any one moment in time, was dependent on an inner movement, one that profoundly influenced

¹⁹⁹ This is an example of attending to the objective and not to the other, who may be tiring, whose attention may be drifting.

not just the nature of the encounter but the future that could emerge from that encounter depending whether it was a genuine meeting or a mismeeting.

An essential part of Theory U's approach involves turning the camera back on yourself (Scharmer, 2009, p. 15)²⁰⁰. Ellen's awareness and presence, our use of photographs and video, allowed us to do exactly that. She pointed the camera and captured our interactions. By slowing down the interaction, by freezing it, we started to see elements of the interaction that had eluded us. Listening was made present as was its absence. The moments in time, had both a past (attitude, intentions and emotions) and a future (consequences). These were not lent but evidenced; these photographs were therefore meaningful (Berger, 1982, p. 91) for they allowed us to understand how the past fed into the present moment, giving rise to the future that unfolded after the photograph was taken. This meant that the between could genuinely become a focus of attention. We found ourselves discussing the various ways *Tachnit* and I attended (or failed to attend) to each other. Gradually, we edged towards an awareness of whether we were absenting ourselves or truly present. An awareness of absence and of presence is bound up with mismeetings and meetings. The photographer's attention was on communication and by focussing on the quality of attention, it was possible to develop our awareness of the absence or presence of mutuality and dialogue. The next section explores how this was achieved.

6.5 *Prototyping a relationship founded on trust and dialogue*

Prototyping a relationship with *Tachnit* founded on trust and dialogue meant that we had to learn to meet, to feel safe together, attending to each other as one whole person to another. Opening to and being open with means letting go of any hidden agendas and simply being present in the moment.

Genuine meeting embodies directness and wholeness. By directness Buber means immediacy, presence without agendas. (Kramer, 2003, p. 22)

For working equines, especially in sport, their economic value "encourages a foreshortening of training in many instances to the detriment of the animal's welfare" (McLean and McGreevy, 2010, pp. 187-188). Genuine meeting, however, values the

²⁰⁰ At the foot of the U one is confronted with Source: one's Self, one's work and purpose.

whole person, not their utility. In forsaking the tools that foreshorten training, that impose control, I was privileging dialogue and uncertainty for, in relinquishing control, the outcome was uncertain and therefore meaningful (Berger, 1982, p. 91).

I do not pretend that the account that follows captures all the mystery of our meetings. I am, however, humbly focussing on certain aspects that I believe to be significant and meaningful. These are naming, choosing to move closer and embodied attunement. These are each, in their own way, *I-Thou* movements.

6.5.1 Naming

Honouring the uniqueness of the person necessitates seeing them as individuals. According to Finch (2008), names are, at least in contemporary Western Society, a marker both of individuality and kinship. For Fudge (2004), however, one of the barriers to animal biographies (and arguably therefore to individuality) is the absence of a name²⁰¹. Opening to *Tachnit*, honouring her story, meant seeing her as more than a foal. She needed a name. There was, however, a problem for mules are called, in Berber, either foal (*Tachnit*) or mule (*Aserdoun* if male, *Taserdount* if female). There are exceptions, but these are very rare and usually instigated by foreign visitors. Hamish Brown (2007, p. 5) named the two mules that accompanied him on his 90-day traverse of the Atlas, Taza and Tamri, after his starting and finishing points. They "would become distinct personalities in the weeks ahead ... and by far our biggest and most constant concern" he remarks. (p. 18). To understand why, in North African culture, despite their importance²⁰², they are not named, it is helpful to refer to the Emir Abd el-Kader and General Dumas (1851/2008, pp. 164-165):

Despite all the bonds that unite man and horse, despite the solidarity born of familiarity, interests and religion, the muslim will never give to his horse a human name. These have been born by saints: It would be a great sin, a sacrilege, to apply them to an animal, even if he were the noblest of all animals.. We give names only to the most illustrious horses ...

²⁰¹ It is the first standard factual category provided by the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Fudge, 2004, p. 21). She goes on to describe how one

²⁰² and the 'bonds' that may exist between humans and equines.

A list of suitable names follows, describing qualities (Victorious, Patient, Pure, Swift), colours (Tar, Ruby, Night) or other animals (Gazelle, Dove, Grasshopper) before the telling and final line on the matter: "We give, more or less, the same names to slaves" (p. 164).

It was therefore hardly surprising that the call for names met with little response from the local population who could not be persuaded to see beyond *Tachnit* and *Taserdount*. A call for names was issued giving rise to a list, from which the young mule's handlers and owners chose "Bella". And Bella she became.

Is it necessary to name the other to meet genuinely? No, for such meetings do not involve words, they involve attention, feeling and understanding. Words, lest we forget it, divide. What is called for when dialoguing is respect of the synechistic ontology (Anderson, 2008) born of integrity (Brown 2015; McManus, 2004), and the wholeness implicit in *I-Thou* encounters (Friedman, 1955, p. 95; Kramer, 2003, pp. 99-101). A name is, I believe essential, however, when speaking and writing of her and of our meetings. In speaking of Bella, I intend audiences to understand that I speak not of any young mule but of Bella. In introducing her name midway through this chapter, I also invite the reader to feel the unease that knowing her as 'foal' can give rise to. I ask you to attend to how we meet the other. In short, I ask you to experience the shift as we move away from attending as *I-It* and attend as *I-Thou*.

6.5.2 *Choosing to move closer*

Dialogical wholeness involves both surrender and action for one has both to choose to enter into relationship with and be reciprocally chosen (Kramer, 2003, p. 22). This implies choosing to move closer, overcoming judgement, cynicism and fear, surrendering into curiosity, compassion and courage. It also implies embracing the uncertainty and mystery that genuine meeting and dialogue gives rise to.

Moving closer together implies feeling safe, trusting. Establishing mutual trust is a communicative endeavour. By attending to the between, by caring about how Bella felt and, perhaps most importantly, by trusting and respecting her, we came to know and care for each other.

Attending to Bella meant letting go of my fears and my need to control the situation. The same was true in reverse. We both avoided threats and threatening situations. We both wanted safety, a safe space in which we could dialogue. How was this achieved? Creating a safe space in which a relationship can be developed creatively with each partner suspending their own inner voices and attending to the other opens up a world of possibility²⁰³. Being present to each other must recognise this as art for it arises as the product of two creative intelligences open to each other and to that which might emerge as they interact. For Scharmer (2009, pp. 187-188), a holding space is “consciously created through a process of context sharing, storytelling and deep listening”; it is “when deep calls unto deep” (Kramer, 2003, p. 78). It took time for Bella and I to understand what that safe space looked and felt like. We worked in her stable, in the enclosure that led from the stable, on the flat area of ground above the stable, in the garden and on the paths above the village. In doing so, we discovered that a safe space had psychological as well as physical aspects to it. It was, very simply, a space, a narrow ridge (Buber, 1965, p. 204) in which we could give our full attention and truly listen to each other. In this space, outside distractions were eliminated and both of us let go of our fears. For both of us, this space can perhaps best be summarised by the triangle formed by the mule’s body and my two arms (Figures 6.2a-6.2b).

Initially, the stairs down into Bella's enclosure provided me with safe access into her compound. I could sit on the steps and engage her curiosity. She was very food oriented and this was used to ask her to come to me. Asking her to stand calmly was rewarded with a piece of apple. She came to associate this request for calmness with me saying “SShhhhh” and standing up straight to her. The next step consisted of stepping down from the safety of the steps and again asking her to come to me. From this position, it was easy to step into her shoulder and establish the safe triangle.

During the initial approach, my attention is on reading her, Bella’s on reading me. She is constantly reading her environment for threats and I needed to step into her World map. This involves listening to her, feeling whether she is relaxed, watching her ears,

²⁰³ This is the threshold of the emergent future (Scharmer, 2009), the narrow ridge on which *I-Thou* meet (Buber, 1965, p. 204).



Figure 6.2a: A safe triangle is formed by the mule and the arms of the handler. The hands lie gently over the pelvis and nose allowing for two-way communication. Both individuals are thus in dialogue, both feel safe and are open to the other.

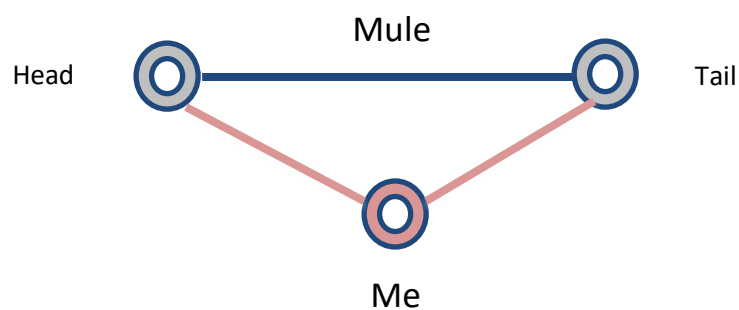


Figure 6.2b: A safe triangle feels safe because both parties feel unthreatened and calm. They are in contact, sustained physical contact; dialogue is thus sustained and intentions clarified.

facial expression and tail, evaluating her behaviour and constantly asking if she is ok with you being there. It also involves telling her that you are calm – dropping your shoulders, opening your chest, talking to her, moving slowly and steadily, embodying calmness. This mutuality is dialogical, providing us with moment-by-moment opportunities to trust each other. That trust was embodied; we experienced and came to know what it feels like to trust each other.

Establishing a safe space drew on an exploration of our respective comfort zones. In doing so, countless thresholds were crossed. And each time we returned from venturing over the threshold and into our respective stretch zones, we had to find ways of integrating our new awareness into the practices - the way(s) of being together - that we were co-creating. The growth of our respective comfort zones is something we thus embodied not individually, but collectively: We grew together.

I felt comfortable at her shoulder and, in this position, could turn her head towards me and turn her rear end away from me. This safe and strong position reassures the handler and creates the circumstances for listening, which, in turn, communicate themselves to the mule. In this position, the age-old fear of being kicked by a mule is suspended and can come to be forgotten altogether as trust develops. Confidence is thus embodied; it is felt and experienced and can be cultivated. It communicates itself to the mule for she starts to see consistency and comes to understand clear messages. It also communicates itself to those watching and helps undermine and challenge their own fears and distrust. The Moroccan saying that warns people not to trust a mule as, even dead, they will kick you with their shoes²⁰⁴ then starts to look a little less credible.

Choosing to move closer to each other implies freedom of choice. It implies the give and take of a request, the possibility of a refusal. There is no room for command and the certainty of obedience. Dialogue implies uncertainty. The judicious use of good positioning coupled with my increasing ability to attend to Bella, meant that I could focus on her and on what lay between us. Initially, our communication was mediated by a head collar and lead rope, gentle handling devices that allowed me to ask her to turn her head and bend her neck towards me. This helped initiate a turning circle that, crucially allows the safe place to be preserved or re-established. I stayed at her

²⁰⁴ "Méfie-toi du mulet, même mort il te frapperait de ses fers." (Goldenberg, 2000, p. 38)

shoulder, neither of us felt threatened. For me, this is one of the essential movements to practice with a mule if one wants to be able to calm, slow and stop her. Calming here is crucial for, in creating a space for judgements, suspicion and fear to be suspended, it was possible for Bella and I to experience calmness, to engage curiously and learn to trust each other.

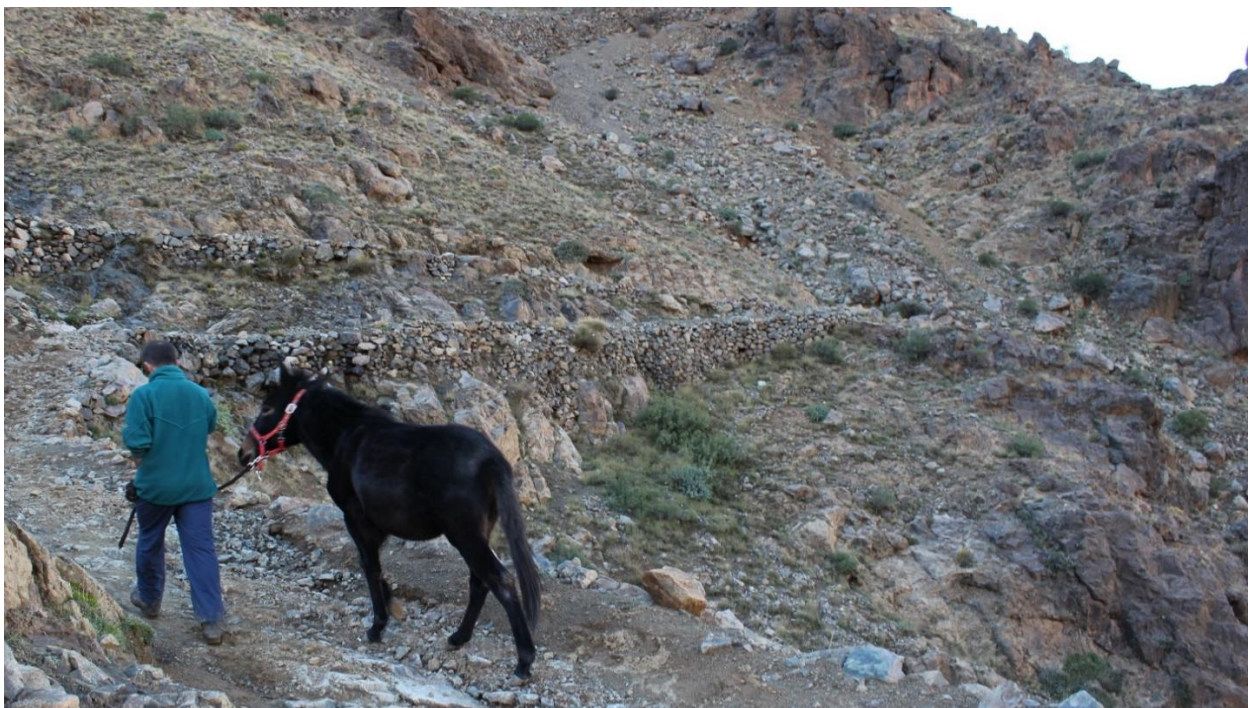
On the trail, I could step back to her shoulder and ask her to turn her head and bend her neck (Figures 6.3a-6.3b). This movement was practised until it became second nature to both parties. If accompanied by a calming voice, a little reassurance, it helps re-establish that safe space.

The descent ... was attempted for the first time. She was a ... handful at times and at one point, tried to bite the fleece at the back of my neck and jump onto me. I had to have stern words with her and turn her tightly. She was perhaps being playful and did not realise that it was a potentially dangerous situation. I was surprisingly unconcerned about the edge, however, and knew that she would turn easily enough.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ Field Notes 24, p. 35 (25th November, 2014).



Figures 6.3a-6.3b: On the trail, Bella and I practise turning a tight circle together. This serves as a means of re-establishing connection and dialogue for she is asked to listen to me. Once the understanding is established we can walk on. Note the slack lead rope held across my body and the attention Bella is paying to me



6.5.3 *Moving with*

The 'shaping' work (Marks, 2002, pp. 206-207) undertaken meant that the threshold for a kick²⁰⁶ continued to rise as awareness, trust and understanding are developed. Both mule and non-mule can sense how comfortable each other is in this proximity. They can feel each other, the muscle tension, the resistance, when one or other moves and learn to respond appropriately. In the same way that Fantasia et al (2014, p.6) argue of the cooperative process that intentions and goals become "manifest in speakers' behaviour, shaped and adjusted" as interactions unfold, I argue that, as fears subside, as our own inner voices quieten, a listening space emerges in which one hears, sees and can come to know the other with outcomes arising from this encounter. I further concur with Fantasia et al that this does not require mutual understanding of each other's interest or purpose regarding the shared action.

To better feel her, to develop deeper awareness of how she was feeling, I found myself abandoning the head collar and getting ever closer to her until there was nothing between us; nothing and everything. We were one, our relationship was "of persons mutually and reciprocally united" (Kramer, 2003, p. 80). We learnt to move together gradually as we came to know and trust each other. When offering her food, I would pass the food from my offering hand to the other hand, thus bringing her head and neck across my body. This could be done with a hand on the head collar, then with no hand on the head collar but with contact maintained via the lead rope (Figure 6.4), then with no head collar.

Turning was developed further as a safe, trusting knowing was established. When undertaking groundwork with her, I, initially, stood off from her shoulder, with a hand on her lead rein or head collar and another over her pelvis. To progress this, I took to standing with my back against her, her head cupped in my arm. I could feel her and how she was feeling. I could turn my whole body and, with it, her head and neck (Figures 6.5a-6.5b). Indeed, when I leaned back, she started to turn around me and this became a dependable way of turning her. She thus learnt to feel comfortable wrapped around me and wrapping herself around me. This is knowing as feeling safe, as mutual trust, as

²⁰⁶ Or indeed a warning kick - for close attention to what a mule says allows you to pick up the clear messages that she offers to those willing and able to listen. Failure to heed these messages and modify one's own behaviour is what precipitates the kick.

oneness. Turning and circling were thus achieved (of which more later), turning not just around each other but towards each other. Turning “away from a self-reflexive monologue ... and toward the wordless depths of genuine *I-Thou* dialogue (Kramer, 2003, p. 159).



Figure 6.4: Bella is encouraged to reach across my body. Holding food and lead rope together, allows me to turn my body and thereby hers.

In this position, my free hand was available to run toward and down her hindleg, exploring how accepting she was of this. This step-by-step, exploration of our respective comfort zones is a trust exercise, a form of dialogue; it repeats the question, are you ok with this? If she feels relaxed and accepting, I allow my hand to gently carry on down her back leg to her foot. It is only when she is happy with my hand resting there that I lean back into her and, in doing so, shift her weight slightly onto the contralateral limb. A gentle lift brings the foot up and this is held briefly with the hand relaxed (Figures 6.5c-6.5g). I learnt to recognise when to stop, when I am asking too

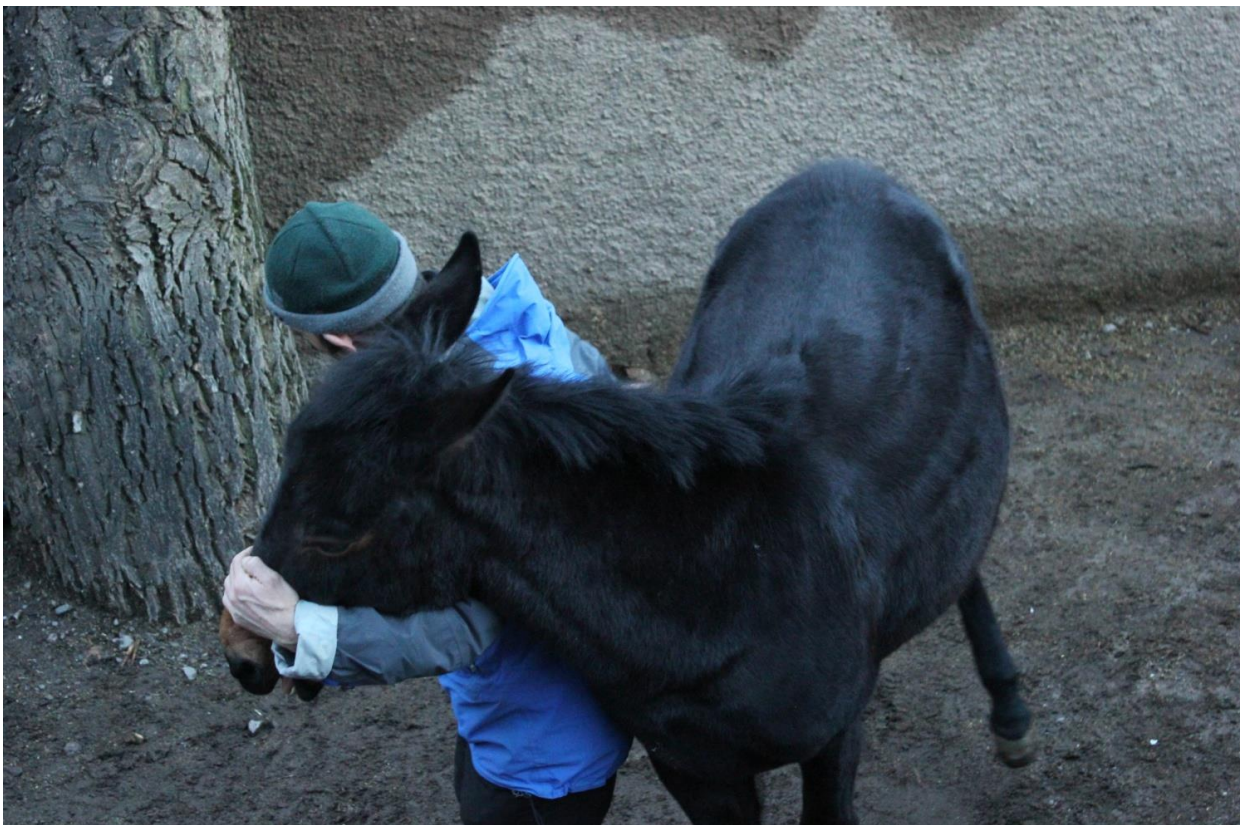
much, relinquishing any desire to keep pushing and asking. I thank her (Figure 6.5h) and maybe she thanks me. And so, the shaping continues. Gradually we build up to the point where Bella is so relaxed that I can touch her nose with her hind foot (Figure 6.5i) and let go of her head whilst still holding her hind foot. This is significant because, at this point, I am vulnerable: If I have not been listening to her, if I have misjudged how relaxed she is, I can get kicked. It is not a question of courage though for, if I have to ask that question, it is because I am listening to myself (absenting myself)²⁰⁷ when I should be listening to the mule. This level of awareness of the other is born of hours of communion, communication and genuine community (Kramer, 2003, pp. 73-95).

When standing facing her and asking her to turn her head and give me her back leg (Figures 6.6a-6.6c), the same attentiveness and awareness is called for. In this case, letting go of the head allows me to run my hand down her neck and over her back before, again, asking for the back foot. Complete trust is required of her as she is free to respond as she likes (Figure 6.6d); this demands presence. As trust builds, we discover a surprising ability to be curious; when judgement is suspended, curiosity floods in. I can crouch beside her, making myself vulnerable and ask her to lift her front leg. We are each thus making ourselves vulnerable (Figures 6.7a-6.7d). Soon I can pick her feet up and pick them out without there being any need to hold her head, leaving her free to exercise her curiosity and playfulness (Figure 6.7e). This is when I know that her real character is starting to show itself. In such moments, we are present to each other.

²⁰⁷ See Buber's description of his own childhood encounters with a horse (Buber, 1967, pp. 66-67) for his own description of this distinction, of this turning.



Figures 6.5a-6.5b: After stepping into her shoulder, a cupped hand can ask her to bring her head round; she is wrapping herself around me. We move together. I lean back and slightly away from her head to initiate a turn that, if pursued, becomes a circle.





Figures 6.5c-6.5d: With the mule's head turned and my own knees bent, a little of my weight can be pushed backwards as I ask her to give me her hind leg. She has to offer it though. If she does not want to and resists (or kicks) I am going too fast. We are thus listening to each other.





Figures 6.5e-6.5f: Listening to each other employs all the senses. Above I can feel that she is relaxed, I know she is listening to me and is curious. I can sense her tail hanging calmly and when it does flick briefly when the foot is raised, I know from her state of mind that it is momentary.



Figures 6.5g-6.5h: The tail settles. She is calm and relaxed as am I. We are connected in that moment, there is *I-Thou*. It could be argued that the reward for her is being listened to and that the orange peel is unnecessary. It is all, however part of the mutual relationship we forged together.



Figure 6.5i: Wordless, embodied dialogue was developed to the point where Bella would allow me to touch her nose with her hind foot and would remain calm and accepting throughout.



Figures 6.6a-6.6b: Bella stands calmly while I run my hand over her back. In a matter of seconds, I am touching, then picking up her back leg, whilst showing her what I am doing.



Figures 6.6c-6.6d: I then let go of her head and move my hand down her back, taking her back foot on my knee. Note how she is listening to me when I have released her head. Her ears are turned towards me, our bodies and embodied movements moving in concert.





Figures 6.7a-6.7b: Bella appears curious to see what I am doing with her leg. She then presents her face and invites me to blow into her nose.



Figures 6.7c-6.7d: Making oneself vulnerable involves surrendering one's defences. This requires that trust be established through dialogue. Here, I have chosen to sit on the floor and engage Bella in conversation. She is calm and curious, playful even.

Figure 6.7e: Here, I am cleaning out one of the mule's front feet whilst she appears happy to explore what I might think of her nibbling the hair at the back of my head. This playfulness is born of trust, curiosity and mutuality



Berger (1982, p. 8) argues that “to touch something is to situate oneself in relation to it” and (p. 9) that “the faculty of touch is like a static, limited form of sight”. In learning to feed Bella, I open not just my palm but myself to her. I trust her to take food gently from my hand; she trusts me to give it. Surrender and action (Kramer, 2003, p. 22). My hand meets her lips. We meet. She makes use of the long sensory vibrissae on her muzzle and lips. Calmness, stillness, presence allow us to do this. Gone are the abrupt movements born of fear. Bella develops confidence in the consistency of my approach. I can then go further. When I ask her to take my hand into her mouth, I do so step-by-step. I ask her if she is ok with my hand over her lips, then establish that she is ok with a finger inside the lip. I then run that finger over her gums. Each time she confirms she is ok. There comes a point when I can place that finger trustingly between her incisors, knowing she will not bite. I can also offer up my hand and / or arm to her for her to lick and nibble (Figure 6.8a); we even establish that she is ok with my arm across her mouth (Figure 6.8b).

The ground work described above provided a dialogical platform for progressing onto ridden work. This was undertaken using a bitless bridle, in line with the principles of intelligent horsemanship, promoting gentle and effective communication as opposed to control. In Ellen’s report on this work (Cochrane, 2015a, p.9), she lists the training objectives for Bella’s ridden work:

- to stand still while being mounted
- to walk on when asked
- to stop when asked with the bitless bridle
- to turn when asked with the bitless bridle
- to remain still whilst being dismounted

Ellen then elaborates further on the consultative approach taken on the young mule’s first ride down to the village:



Figure 6.8a: Bella is calm. She is attentive and curious. We have eye contact and are listening to each other. There is trust for I have asked her for her back foot and she has given it to me. She in turn, is nibbling my arm.



Figure 6.8b: Bella has allowed me to put my hand in her mouth and move it across. She is mouthing it with her tongue and the bars of her mouth. Both of us are calm and feel safe.

The aim ... was to observe Bella's reaction to being ridden on the descent and to start training her to understand rider commands. I mounted Bella from the ground ... gently jumping at her side ... to judge her reactions to my movement and not to startle her. I then jumped up to lay across her to check she had no reaction to my weight on her back. She moved very slightly but this was just her shifting her own weight and adjusting to mine. I then slowly sat up ... to swing my leg over her back and be mounted. She stood perfectly still and appeared very calm. I then asked Bella to turn by feeling on left rein and opening my arm out to ask her to bend and she brought her head around well allowing me to turn her.

Whilst it could be argued that a training agenda is apparent here, it is clear that Ellen attends fully to Bella. She does not rush; curiosity prevails over judgement. She feels rather than pulls the rein. Her actions are questions that invite Bella to respond; she is free to choose to refuse or to accept. Is this 'technical dialogue' or 'genuine dialogue' (Kramer, 2003, p. 33)? If the exchange is motivated by a need to understand something or gain information, if the communication is "prompted solely by the need of objective understanding" (Buber, 1965, p. 19) then it could be described as technical. The quality of Ellen and Bella's mutual attention is striking, however, for both are open to transformation. It is not knowledge that is sought here but reciprocal knowing; a relationship is being co-created.

Later, in her report, Ellen turns to technicalities, explaining how mutual understanding of stopping and turning are developed:

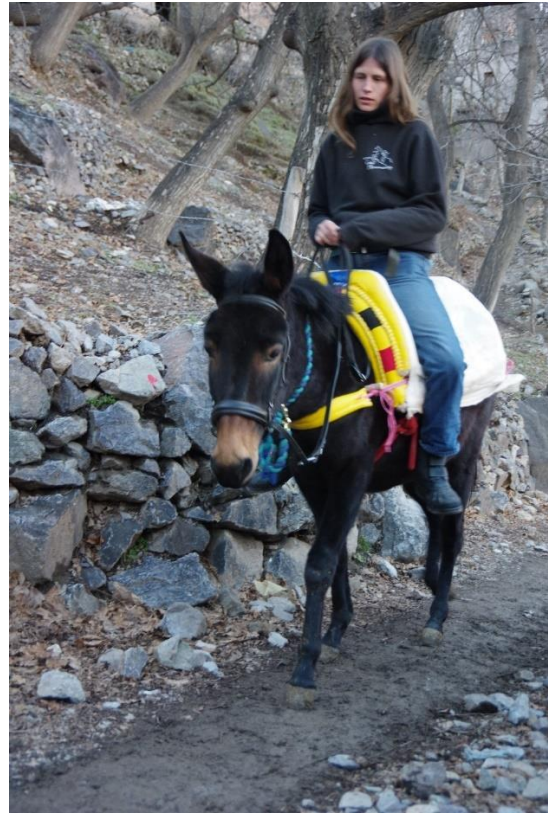
Bella is ridden in her leather bitless bridle which works with pressure on the nose and ... on the straps which cross under the jaw. When pressure is applied on one rein to turn, the mule feels this pressure painlessly but persuasively on the opposite side of the face. When pressure is applied to both reins to stop, the mule feels this on both of the cross-under straps and the nose creating what is known as a "whole head hug". This feeling often produces a calming effect and encourages the mule to flex at the poll to bring her head down and stop. During the descent Bella was learning to respond from the feelings the bridle was giving her, so to begin with stopping took a few attempts as she had never been asked to stop by a rider before. I used the voice command that she has learnt from the groundwork to associate the rein pressure with stopping. Similarly, during the descent we practised turning which was difficult to begin with as she had to understand what it was I was asking. It was therefore beneficial to have someone on the ground to turn her as I asked from on board so that she could understand what was being asked of her. (Cochrane, 2015a, p. 9)

Ellen's approach attends to Bella's communications. She is thus given the benefit of the doubt and included in the decision-making process. They are working together; they

are **dialoguing**. Ellen's ability to suspend judgement and adopt an open-minded approach is evident in this following excerpt:

Although ... she will walk well when being led, when she chooses to stop she can be hard to get moving again. This mostly happens when she is unsure of the ground ahead of her, for example muddy parts of the path or puddles and icy/slippery ground. This can also happen if she is tired, either physically or mentally, or if there is a lot going on around her that distracts her. It can be difficult to understand exactly why she hesitates so much, but my interpretation of her is that she is very intelligent and likes to think things through. If she is unsure of something she doesn't get flighty but instead stands and thinks the situation through, which sometimes takes her a while. There is one part of the path ... that she always tends to hesitate at, and on her first ride up there she stopped for a little while. My attempts to ask her to move forward were unsuccessful so I just sat and waited for her to move, she turned her head around to me as if to tell me she was ready before stepping forward again. (Cochrane, 2015a, p. 12)

This kind of work takes patience, time and curiosity. It also benefits from a focus on process rather than on goals an ability to let go of specific objectives is therefore valuable. In doing so, Ellen also demonstrates a willingness to suspend any assumptions she might have and, instead exercise curiosity about the young mule's world view (Figures 6.9a-6.9d). I believe, the quality of attention that Bella and Ellen demonstrate for each other also means they are open to the *Thou* and come to experience and appreciate the state of relational grace born of such meetings.



Figures 6.9a-6.9b: Ellen and Bella's first ride down to the village saw them attending closely to each other as they navigated several challenges including the potential threat of a strange man up in a walnut tree (arrow).



Figure 6.9c: Ellen pays close attention to Bella and to the space (environment) in which they are working. The presence of the older mule behind provides some degree of reassurance as does familiarity with the path.



Figure 6.9d: Aids are used as gently as possible, seeking always to convey a request with the minimum of pressure and force. Note the slack reins and the attention the young mule is paying to Ellen.

6.6 *Bella alerts us to absencing and downloading*

In seeking to amplify the whispers of this little mule, we became aware of the shouts that sought to drown out her voice and deny her her story, aware too of the various ways humans absent themselves. I became aware of how our own baggage (both mine and Bella's) got in the way of effective co-creation and of how we needed to strip everything back to see each other's essential selves, to meet genuinely. Bella's availability meant that she recognises the availability of others, she can sniff out their fear, their self-preoccupation, their absencing and downloading.

By giving Bella a name, by creating a space for her to tell her story, the hobbles that would otherwise have defined who she was permitted to be, were loosened. Giving her free rein to express herself challenged those who clung to the need to control mules. And, in doing so, it highlighted the judgements, prejudices, beliefs, assumptions and fears of those members of the community who had never taken the time to see a mule's essential self. What was not so clear was the extent to which this baggage weighed these men down and left them struggling to know with their minds and hearts wide open.

Every time she was described as *Tachnit*, I realised to what extent this lumped her in with all the other young mules, denying her that which was unique to her, a name, a personality, an essential Self, thoughts, feelings and all the other elements that might figure in a 'mulography'. Whenever someone commented that she would behave better if loaded and worked with a bit in her mouth, I bristled at the humans whose beliefs and practices sought to objectify and silence her, forcing her to submit to their will. It was this emerging realisation that helped make sense of the tendency owners have to hobble young mules, to leave their mules tethered with the pack saddle on their backs unable to fully enjoy any respite they might have from work, to deny them food and water and to leave the bit in their mule's mouths when stopping for a rest. I was attending to the *I-Thou*, they were attending to the *I-It*.

It was this realisation that led me to create a space in which the arguments of the owners and handlers of mules justifying the use of the traditional bit and resisting the call to abandon this tool and explore a more humane way of relating to the mule could be challenged, not just by me, but by the mule. For this to happen, Bella had to be given

more say in what we did. We had to learn to listen to each other, we had to establish dialogue and people had to see what we were generating together. In doing so, we were able to show people that there are other ways of being with a mule and of co-creating a relationship.

I also had to find ways of overcoming the downloading and absencing that prevented others from seeing Bella. These included:

- i. Fear of the mule.
- ii. Failure to listen and attend to the mule.
- iii. Lack of awareness of the mule's needs and preferences.
- iv. Lack of awareness of the value of positive reinforcement and disadvantages of negative reinforcement.
- v. Habit of walking behind the mule.

Approaching Bella, initiating dialogue with her, challenged her handlers to confront their own fears and to learn to read the mule and make appropriate choices based on an understanding of her feelings, needs and preferences.

The realisation that positive reinforcement can introduce a welcome element into the relationship, one that provides the mule with reasons to approach the handler, engaging curiously rather than fearfully or suspiciously, is crucial. These various elements were evidenced in a series of videos of Omar learning to put on Bella's head collar that were then reviewed with staff.

Before starting, Omar explained that he is already worried when he goes down into her yard. ..." he doesn't trust her, especially when she has no head collar on. This is why they prefer to leave the head collar on at night".

We showed Omar the video and pointed out that Bella has her bum towards him and that her ears are directed towards him²⁰⁸. Given Bella's behaviour, I asked Omar why he went towards her. He replied that it was because we asked him to. I replied that we

²⁰⁸ Yesterday, Ellen had explained that this was because the mule is listening but that there comes a point when the mule is no longer listening. When the ears are flattened, she is upset / angry and about to do something about it.

asked him to put the head collar on the mule, not to go to the mule. Lahcen then interjected "I do not trust mules". "Omar ... he is from the beginning scared 100%."²⁰⁹

The realisation that Bella could be asked to come towards the handler (and may even do so without being asked) provided opportunities to work with rather than against her. It also unsettled the oft-heard downloading that she "does not want to go to work", opening the door to other interpretations, including the possibility that she does not associate anything positive with her handlers' approach; that she might well want to go to work were the experience more pleasurable and the elements that make work frightening and / or unappealing identified and eliminated.

Identifying and then exploring these possibilities is a creative process. Asking Omar to explore how the head collar can be put on each day requires he interact with Bella, negotiate obstacles together and work to establish mutual trust. As trainers, we developed exercises that helped Omar and Hassan overcome their fear and learn to read Bella better. Having Omar feed Bella from behind the safety of a barrier (Figures 6.10a-6.10d) was therefore a useful exercise as was having him approach her in other controlled ways (with me beside her, with me in between them, with an open doorway ensuring she came to him head first). These represented embodied ways of learning, embodying a new way of experiencing the relationship: acting oneself into a new way of thinking rather than thinking oneself into a new way of acting.

In letting go of fear, it was possible for Omar and Hassan to experience ways of working with Bella that allowed confidence and trust to develop. One exercise focused on reading Bella better and involved the use of a traffic light system:

We discussed body language and whether she is happy or unhappy with things. I introduced the traffic light metaphor at this point to explain that they need to be able to tell whether the mule is happy, uncertain or unhappy (green, orange or red). This allowed us to discuss which ear (and tail) positions corresponded with the three colours.

Attending to Bella, attending to the way we met and dialogued focussed attention on the between. Awareness of how to commune provided us with opportunities to draw

²⁰⁹ Field Notes 26, page 18 (14th January, 2014). In this quote, Lahcen (the hotel's receptionist) is acting as a translator.

others into that community by encouraging them to open towards her and experience genuine meeting. At times like these, all involved experienced the springing forth of a new quality of communication as they simultaneously stepped into direct relationship with each other (Kramer, 2003, p.49).

A second tool involved feeling strong and confident as they learnt to say 'No' to Bella. By drawing themselves up tall, pushing their shoulders back, making themselves big and pushing a hand palm forward out towards her, their 'No' felt confident. She saw this and responded accordingly. Initially, this had to be done with me standing beside them but soon they felt confident enough doing it themselves. Embodying this confidence and clarity builds confidence.

A third tool involved familiarising them with the turning circle created by standing off her shoulder, bringing the head round, achieving head turn and neck bend and pushing her rear end away. Developing the ability to turn mules allows the handler to start feeling safe and grow in confidence. It then becomes possible to relax and listen more attentively (Figures 6.11a-6.11c). Once this has been achieved at home, the next stage is to apply these techniques under increasingly challenging and unpredictable conditions. Treks undertaken with Bella in the mountains allowed the efficacy of these techniques to be tested and further developed.



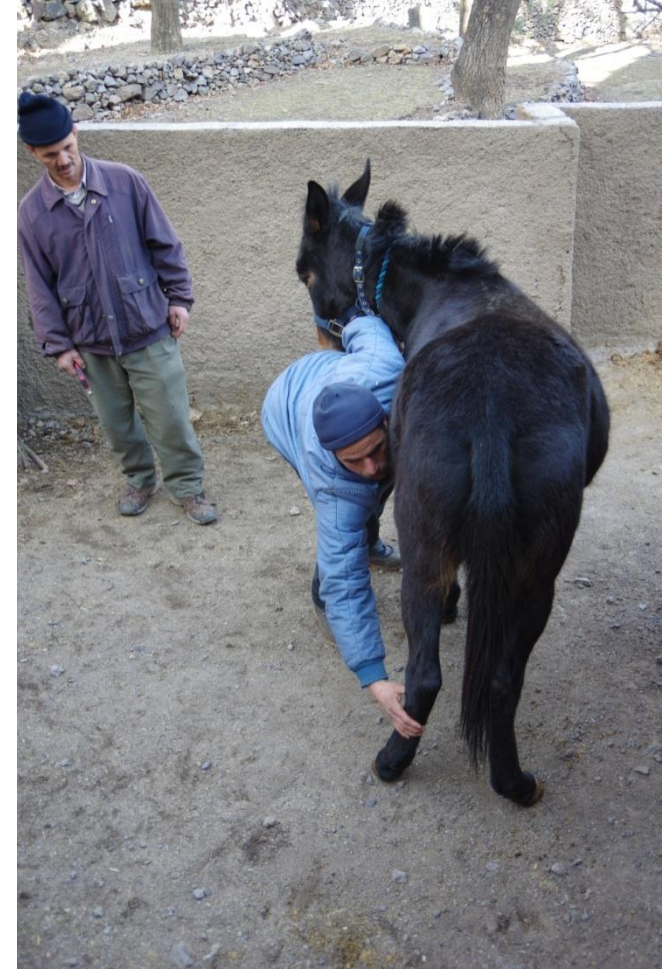
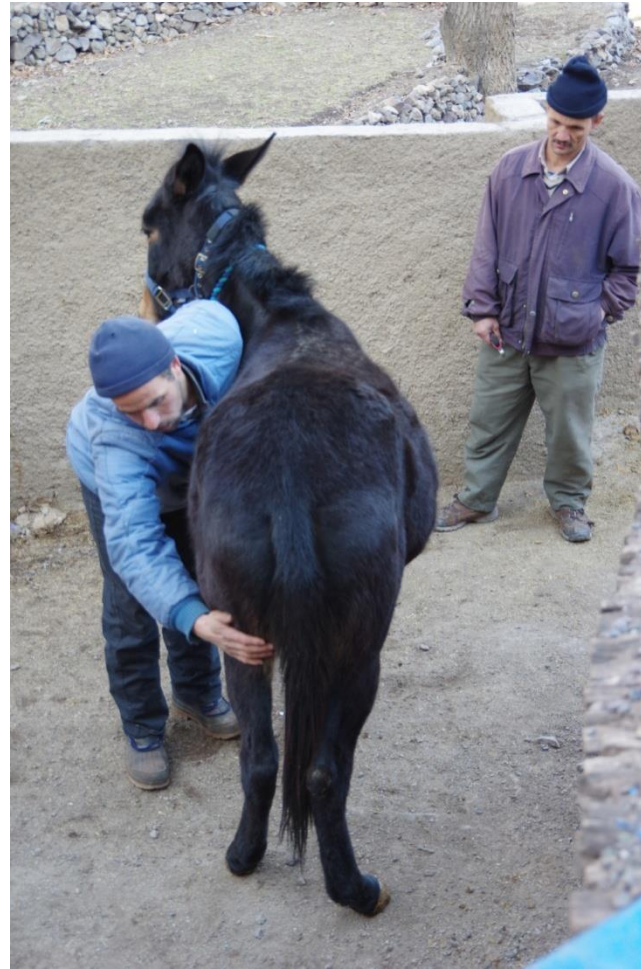
Figures 6.10a-6.10b: Omar overcomes the fear that blinds: Omar (in blue) feels safe behind a barrier and can pay attention to Bella's emotional state. Initially, she approaches with her ears back, uncertain about the situation. Her ears relax however, when he opens a bag of food. She approaches him of her own accord and peers into the bag. Neither the mule, nor Omar feel overly anxious.





Figures 6.10c-6.10d: Omar now has the mule's attention and offers her a piece of orange peel that she gently takes from his hand. At this point he feels comfortable and is attending to her.





Figures 6.11a-6.11c: Omar and Bella engage in dialogue. Omar has a hand on Bella's lead rope and has achieved head turn and neck bend. He is in a safe position beside her shoulder and can maintain this because he has contact with her head and neck allowing him to move with her. He feels safe, is attending to her, aware that she is not tense and is listening to him. Her tail remains still as he works his hand down to her fetlock; he can be confident that she is accepting of his hand and open to the request that he is about to make of her.



Figure 6.11d: When asking for her foot, she raises it. Omar then passes the lead rope and head collar to Hassan who passes him the hoof pick. Bella remains calm throughout.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has traced how knowing the mule is transformed when we shift the source and field structure of attention from which we operate. Shifting from an *I-in-Me* or *I-in-It* to an *I-in-Thou* or *I-in-Now* way of attending (Figure 4.1) impacts not just the way we attend, but the way we meet, who we meet and the outcomes of those encounters and the depth of the U-journey undertaken. Awareness of the *I* that is present thus impacts how and what we see and our co-creative potential. As Scharmer (2009, p. 235) observes: “I attend this way therefore it emerges that way”. The mule we know and the welfare we then enact together is thus a function of the attending *I*.

This chapter has, in attending to mismetings, highlighted how factors such as attachment to and lack of awareness of outcomes, intentions and fears can prevent us from seeing. In turning to the other, an attitudinal shift occurs that, when reciprocated, allows genuine meeting and dialogue to take place when mule and human make themselves available to each other. These *I-Thou* moments arising when mule and human are available to each other represent a “high peak of relational life, a sudden flash” (Kramer, 2003, p. 49) that vanishes with the experience²¹⁰. This knowing is experiential but the experience is not self-contained for it “activates between persons, the emergence of something new, beyond words” (Kramer, 2003, p. 48). Such knowing is thus embodied and inexpressible; it cannot be described for to do so throws that which arose into the realm of *I-It*. It must be experienced for this is the only way to know and understand the mystery and transformative nature of mutual love and acceptance (Rohr, 2016, pp. 140-142).

Engaging Bella in dialogue allowed us to explore the kind of relationship we could co-create together when attending to each other’s essential Self (*I-Thou*) in the present moment (*I-Now*). The creation of a safe space and our letting go of all that prevents us from truly being aware of and present to each other have been emphasised as essential elements of the U-journey. Genuine meeting is available as a form of knowing to all, allowing the potential we carry to know the mule to be developed (Figure 4.12) when turning and opening to the other. This inner movement when reciprocated, allows the

²¹⁰ This resonates with the title of Buller’s (2012) paper on knowing through movement: “One flash of light and then gone”.

dialogical partners to move closer and then, as one. The human and the mule that each emerge from this attitudinal shift and reciprocal opening to the other are “more than one and less than many” (Mol, 2002). As Buber points out turning gives up the false self-asserting self but not the I (2000, p. 78).

Working with Bella developed our awareness of the emergent nature of relationships arising from a co-nurturing of the between. This work’s visibility challenged the wider community’s historical narratives, providing glimpses of what might be possible when mule and human meet and work together. The contrast between *I-Thou* and *I-It* moments, highlighted the ways in which mules are seen and therefore used as objects and can be known differently when met genuinely, one whole person to another. In moving from ego to eco, the mule is thus known differently and this multiplicity spawns cognitive dissonance. The next chapter builds on this, turning first to the muleteer to explore how their circumstances influence their ways of knowing before then exploring how different mule handlers turned away from the cycle of absencing and toward the mule and the moment. In meeting and coming to know their mule, they undertook U-journeys that led to the co-creation of new ways of being together that evolved the mule–muleteer relationship in a new direction with profound implications for muleteers, mules and mule welfare.

CO-SENSING JOURNEYS WITH MULETEERS

Exploring beyond poverty, uncertainty, marginalisation, precarity and fear.

*The mule has to eat, you have to put the shoes on,
you are always dirty, you never have your food how you want, you are not that clean,
you don't enjoy your life and you still get nothing from those people.*

Lahcen²¹¹

²¹¹ Field Notes 32, p. 27 (8th May, 2015).

7.1 Introduction

My co-sensing journeys with muleteers provided insights into how mule welfare practices are embedded in their struggle to earn a living and provide for themselves and their families. Stretching their meagre salary so that it can feed and equip their mules leaves them feeling trapped in a cycle of poverty. In the absence of attempts by the wider industry to co-create a more equitable life for muleteers and their mules, they are left either accepting their fate (Insha'Allah²¹²) or seeking an escape. Our understanding of the multiple ways by which mules are known is thus developed, in this chapter, through the eyes and lived experiences of her handlers. Their preoccupations give rise to absencing and mismetings. We therefore attend to some of the factors that make it difficult to suspend judgment and step out of one's bubble to empathically engage with and meet the mule. That the muleteers can do so and value such moments emphasises the importance of genuine meeting. Every moment presents a threshold, a challenge to stay present, to attend, to know. Turning to the other allows mule and muleteer to appreciate the knowing born of *I-Thou* moments. This involves letting go of their sense of injustice, their fear of the mule and their need to control her. In doing so, they can attend to the mule; in meeting genuinely the *between* is transformed and a more wholesome²¹³ way of being together can emerge.

Of the co-sensing journeys undertaken with some fifty-or-so muleteers, those undertaken with Omar, Mustapha, Mohamed and Samir have been chosen for their insights into (i) how muleteers know and care for their mules and (ii) how slowing down and *re-specting* mules and our relationships with them can provide opportunities to consider the nature of the (more-than working) relationships they and their mules are co-creators of. This chapter places turning to the mule and the transformative potential of genuine meeting and dialogue in context, focussing on the precarity of life as a muleteer and on the muleteer-mule dyad. Omar's story tells how he escaped his life as a shepherd and muleteer; Mustapha's, by contrast, is that of a muleteer who has just entered the profession. These two bookends help contextualise the journeys

²¹² If God wills it!

²¹³ The eightfold path of Buddhism consists of right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right meditation where 'right' is the translation of *samma*. This should be viewed non-dualistically as all-inclusive. Thus, "right view is Wholesome – that is it's of the Whole. It's all inclusive. It leaves nothing out" (Hagen, 1997, p. 55)

undertaken by Mohamed and Samir as they set out to explore and renegotiate the *between*.

7.2 *Omar's story*

Omar's story is typical of someone who grew up in the valley. As we walked the old and vanishing mule paths together, he told me how he had spent much of his early working life on the steep and unforgiving mountainside above the village of Aremd. We were heading up to visit the abandoned copper mines above Tidli²¹⁴. He had worked there as a muleteer for three years in succession (1991-1993), leaving at 5am to arrive at the mine for 7am. He would often give one of the five miners that accompanied him a ride on his mule. He would then load two sacks of mineral ore, each weighing between 75 and 100kg, onto his mule's back and head back to Imlil, where he would arrive at about 11am. There he would unload and receive a chit for his work. At the end of the month, when the lorry arrived from Marrakech to pick up the mineral, he would be paid, receiving a meagre 17 dirhams per day²¹⁵.

I asked him about the load on the mule and whether she suffered any injuries. He was of the opinion that, in those days, the mules were much stronger – partly because they were better fed. There was much more barley being produced in the valley in those days and this suffered with the switch to fruit trees.²¹⁶

The arrival of apple and cherry trees and the high cost of buying in barley has, he explained, meant that "some owners underfeed their mules and some are even reduced to giving them spaghetti!"^{217 218}

The paths we explored together had all but disappeared, reclaimed by the hillside as one rock slide after another had conspired with broom bushes to render the evidence of the mules' passage invisible. Omar, however, could retrace the path for it was etched in

²¹⁴ Tidli is the name given to the area above Aremd. According to Hajj Morris (personal communication 31/08/14), the name of the mine above Aremd was 'Couchar', whilst the bigger one above Tamatert was called 'Talat n Taghsen'.

²¹⁵ Equivalent to £1.30 (at an exchange rate of 13 dirhams to £1).

²¹⁶ Field Notes 18, page 8 (30th August, 2014).

²¹⁷ Field Notes 19, page 19 (2nd September, 2014).

²¹⁸ For further information on the introduction of fruit trees to the valley see Funnell and Parish (1999).

his memory, as it had been in his mule's²¹⁹. Thus, as we followed what was once his daily commute, a picture emerged of the precarious existence these men had carved out for themselves.

I learnt that Omar's father had worked a lot in this mine and that they had worked together. This was at the end of the mine's working life. The miners had used explosives and drills to work the mine and, impressively, there had been no accidents. The only accident occurred after the mine had closed when a local guide fell into one of the shafts and suffered injuries from which he was to die.²²⁰

I asked Omar why they chose this work and heard him say

... that in those days there was no choice. There were very few fruit trees and little or no work in tourism. When the mine closed in 1994, ... he went back to herding for a few years before ... finding work in tourism as a muleteer and then, eventually, as a cook.²²¹

At the mines (Figures 7.1a-7.1d), Omar explained to me that the mules

... once loaded, would not come back along the path we had just tried to follow. This, he said, was too steep. Instead they climbed up to the col above us (the Tizi Oufzad) and from there dropped down to a much better path that contoured round the mountain.²²²

We followed this route, climbing over the col before dropping to the *azibs* (shepherd huts and sheep folds):

We descended to the azib – a veritable scree run over difficult ground, all cut up by water channels. He explained to me that he had spent years of his life tending sheep and goats up here and that the azib belonged to his family.

Today, nobody in Achayn wants to shepherd. He said it wasn't clean ('propre') and the life was too hard. They now employ a shepherd from Tizi Oussem to come over and look after the sheep; his family now only keeps one sheep at home.

²¹⁹ Mules can often follow familiar paths in the dark of night, so well do they attend to their passage. The history of mining is also etched into the memories of the old men of the valley, many of whom were reduced to seeking work there when they were not needed in the fields or to tend their livestock.

²²⁰ Field Notes 19, page 24 (2nd September, 2014).

²²¹ Field Notes 18, page 8 (30th August, 2014) and Field Notes 19, page 30 (2nd September, 2014).

²²² Field Notes 19, page 24 (2nd September, 2014).

Thus, as one source of income closes, another opens. Today, Omar has managed to secure safe, regular employment as a chef, at a local hotel. This means he has a guaranteed income and is in receipt of social security²²³. He is also able to supplement this income by renting out his two spare rooms to visiting Moroccan tourists, earning him 150 MAD per room, per night. Life is thus considerably better than it once was and he will be able to send his children to school.

Omar's story is echoed by others of his generation. In Aremd, there are only a few old shepherds left, no one is continuing the tradition; the shepherds stepping into their shoes come from neighbouring valleys. As Fabrice Cuzin explains when talking about generational change in the villages: "The inheritance of a way of life is broken; ... the old no longer serve as a reference for the next generation. There are no apprenticeships"²²⁴. Michèle Salmona (1994, pp. 93-97) emphasises the importance to animal welfare of life-long apprenticeships in peasant societies: Whether speaking of the Peul or the French, the transmission of animal knowledge from one generation to the next necessitates the selection of those with an aptitude for this work and the development of a slow, gentle, patient disposition and fortitude in the face of hardships and isolation. This transmission and, in particular, the affective component, is lost when children go away to school or attend college later in life to learn about the technical (*It*) aspects of animal production (Salmona, 1994, p. 97).

The young of the valley are all striving to establish new lives and forge new paths for themselves and their families. But how does one escape from poverty? What mules and mule welfares does this absencing enact?

Where historically; mining had offered opportunities to earn hard currency (Benkhadra and El-Abbaoui, 2006; Moret, 1930), today other opportunities have emerged. Those who complete their baccalaureate can go on to university and can apply to the guide school with a view to training and qualifying as a mountain guide. The ambitious aspire to set up agencies and partner with a foreign agency who will send them clients. Many set up gîtes, adding to the supply of accommodation that has seen Imlil offer nearly as

²²³ Recent changes to Moroccan legislation mean that this covers not just his wife and children but also his parents.

²²⁴ Field Notes 18, page 4 (29th August, 2014). Interview with Fabrice Cuzin, consultant biologist, ex-manager of the CAF refuges and instructor at the CFAMM. Translation: "«La transmission est cassée ... les anciens ne représentent plus de référence pour les jeunes! ... Il n'y a pas d'apprentissage!»"

many B&B bed nights (47) as Casablanca (57) on TripAdvisor²²⁵! This uncontrolled construction programme (Ramou, 2009) has, arguably, blighted the peaceful character of the valley in what (Goodwin, 2011, pp. 18-22) has described as a “tragedy of the commons”. Those with language skills but no qualifications can find work as receptionists, waiters, drivers and faux guides. Options are limited, however, for the young, unmarried men, who have not completed their schooling. During harvest time, employment can be found bringing in the walnuts, cherries and apples²²⁶. This, however, does not provide a regular income stream. The lucky ones find work locally in shops, hotels, restaurants and cafés; many though find themselves leaving to find work in the cities. Some travel down to Dakhla to find work as paid agricultural labourers, others seek work in Casablanca and other cities or further afield.

²²⁵ Details for B&Bs and Inns checked on the 6th September, 2017. This excludes hotels.

²²⁶ In the case of walnut harvesters, this is recognised as dangerous work, with workers having to scale the trees and move through the canopy to knock walnuts to the ground. As a result, it attracts a daily rate of 300 Mad per day with the walnuts selling for 200-50 MAD per thousand. By comparison, a daily rate for apple harvesters is 100 MAD.



Figures 7.1a-7.1b: After a two-hour uphill walk, along a vanished mule path, we turn a corner and see the mine. Omar shows me one of the shafts and explains how the mineral was carried out by miners and then loaded onto the mule for the journey back down to Imlil.



Figures 7.1c-7.1d: Looking back to the Tizi Oufzdad from the *azibs*, the mule path has disappeared; the ground is now covered with stones and cushion plants. Below, Omar explains the functioning of the *azib* where he once worked.



De Sinety captures the paradox of the rural exodus that sees young Berbers of the Atlas descending to the cities where they find themselves shipwrecked in an alien world where capitalism and individualism hold sway, a world that the visiting tourist is anxious to flee:

Ils ont dû quitter leurs vallées du grand et de l'Anti Atlas qui ne suffisaient plus à les nourrir. Échoués dans cette enceinte polluée, bruyante et agressive, loin des solidarités de leur communauté villageoise, ils font l'apprentissage de la société urbaine, de l'individualisme et d'un capitalisme forcené. ...

Un besoin matériel du minimum de subsistance conduit les jeunes Chleuhs vers la ville, une quête spirituelle d'Occidentaux privilégiés nous la fait quitter. Nos chemins se croisent, nos motivations s'opposent, mais la rencontre demeure possible.²²⁷ (2007, pp. 7-8)

Spaak (1980; p. 228) similarly comments on the socio-cultural insularism that renders it difficult for the people of the High Atlas to leave their villages behind and venture down onto the foreign, anonymous plains where life is easy and a man's bond no longer has the same value. Necessity; however; forces them to leave to find work. The exodus of over 50% of menfolk from these communities is; according to Spaak (1980; p. 230), as grave a concern as desertification. He highlights the developments in agriculture that could help stem this "haemorrhaging", whilst also referring to the promise offered by exploiting other resources including minerals, walnut wood and tourism. Since then, the High Atlas has been transformed by the development of opportunities to earn hard currency from fruit farming and mountain tourism²²⁸ (Bellaoui, 2003; Funnel and Parish, 1999; Oiry-Varaca, 2013; Ramou, 2009). This has not, however, been without its problems for the environment (Boujrouf, 2003) and for communities, which once cohesive and well-ordered are increasingly divided by competition (Boumaza, 1996). Absencing.

²²⁷ Translation: "They were forced to leave their valleys of the High and Anti Atlas, which could no longer feed them. Cast up in this polluted, noisy and aggressive hell hole, far from the solidarity and community of their home villages, they undertake an apprenticeship in urban society, individualism and fanatical capitalism. ... The young Berbers are drawn to the cities by material need. A spiritual quest leads privileged Westerners to flee the cities. Our paths cross, our motivations are opposed but we can encounter each other all the same."

²²⁸ Within this, it is important to distinguish between three forms of tourism: that involving foreign trekkers, that involving locals escaping the city and that involving locals undertaking pilgrimages (Bellaoui, 2003, p. 6).

Tourism has thus allowed those who became guides and gîte owners to make their fortune. But what of those left behind? The unlucky ones - those from poor families, with little or no education - are typically reduced to working as muleteers. Those who have escaped this fate, recognise how lucky they are. A faux guide and driver whose brother still works as a muleteer acknowledges the extent to which muleteers are exploited by the industry:

The muleteers do a lot ... I don't mind if they only pay us 200 dirhams and the other 50 goes back to the muleteer ... because they do most of the things ... what am I doing? It's nothing I take my bag and go walking, I have nuts, water, oranges, I can stop wherever I want and chat with the guests. But the muleteers have to charge the mules ... walk so quick to pass you and you have to find them already making your lunch and then they have to charge the mules and keep going again to reach the final destination. Once he gets there he has to feed his mule, wash, make the dinner. They are doing lots of things for nothing. The payment for the muleteer is nothing at all. Those people deserve more than that. They deserve double price; they deserve even 180 or 200 dirhams.²²⁹

The muleteer's unenviable status places them just above shepherds: at the bottom of the pile. Some spend hours waiting for clients, earning as little as 10 MAD to carry suitcases from the village up to one of the hotels or gîtes. The mules wait too; standing tethered, with their pack saddles on, denied food and water, unable to escape the heat and the tormenting flies.

During the summer, the influx of Moroccan tourists seeking relief from the heat of Marrakech (Bellaoui, 2003, p. 6) provide a stream of potential clients and opportunities to earn 100 MAD for doing the trip to Sidi Chamharouch, potentially 200 MAD if two trips can be squeezed into a day. These 'touristes internes' often negotiate hard and show little concern for mule welfare. On a trip, up to Sidi Chamharouch, Hamid, a muleteer from Aremd, said:

²²⁹ Interview with Lahcen, April, 2015

... foreigners were much readier to think about the mule (liked animals more). He explained this by saying that they would save their scraps for the mule. By contrast, Moroccan tourists would often say that his mule was no good and ask him to hit it in order to make it go faster ... He refused to do so and said: "Je ne l'ai pas trouvé dans une boîte de Vache Qui Rit".²³⁰

Muleteers seeking such work also must contend with the influx of men and boys from other valleys, desperate to secure work and willing to undercut the typical daily rate.

The muleteers has [*sic*] to be all together. If they are not together they are not making any deal. ... If Imlil decide to go for 150 dirhams, but Tachedirt, Oukaïmeden, Ourika they can still come to work for the same price. They have to send a letter to each village in the Atlas who has muleteers who work with tourists ... if anyone move without this price ... then from there, there can be.... It will be difficult but if they work with each other and behave each other they can get to that point.²³¹

During the summer months, many muleteers purchase an old worn out mule and flog her hard through the summer to scrape a living. This can mean denying her rest during that time, then selling her on to avoid paying to feed her through the winter²³². The reality for the mule (Figure 7.2) is thus obscured by the downloading of those desperately seeking employment.

On the track to Aït Aïssa, and again on the climb up to the Tizi n'Oudite, Hamed told me about the challenges of finding work in Imlil. According to him, in his village of Aran, there are only two people who have proper jobs ... They are employees ... they have a certain income. The other men of the village have to find work where they can. For him, this means working hard with a mule through the summer and putting some money by to get him through the winter. He has worked in the cities (both Marrakech and Casablanca) – in pizza restaurants. In Imlil, the men have little to do, however, other than the seasonal work that agriculture and tourism throws their way.²³³

²³⁰ Field Notes 4, page 5 (25th March, 2014). Translation: "I did not find her in a box of Laughing Cow cheese."

²³¹ Interview with Lahcen, April, 2015

²³² This phenomenon is rare in the neighbouring valleys where locals tend to keep and feed their mules through the winter.

²³³ Field Notes 43, page 23 (21st October, 2015).

Hajj, a village elder, explains the problems this can give rise to

Tu connais la région, tu connais les gens. Tu vas trouver il y a quelqu'un qui est pauvre ... acheter un mulet pour 3000 dirhams. ... Un mauvais mulet ... Mais qu'est-ce qu'il fait parce qu'il a besoin pour le travail ... pour gagner pour la famille. Lui, il pense seulement gagner un peu d'argent. Il part sans penser pour la mule. Tu connais les mules qui sont mort dans la montagne c'est les mules pour les pauvres 'man' qui a acheté la mule pour 3000 dirhams, 4000 dirhams.²³⁴

This is life on the margins. The precarious existence led by those struggling to eke out a living is, largely invisible to the visitors and agencies; the consequences on the mule are therefore viewed not through the lens of phoric hardship described by Salmona (1994) but through that of the disapproving tourist and employer. Such has been the challenge of understanding the welfare of equines in the Arab world, since Daumas, in the mid-1800s, cautioned against judging too quickly:

... beaucoup des personnes ont conclu que ce peuple n'avait aucune connaissance des vrais principes hippiques; elles lui ont même refusé tout amour du cheval. C'est qu'elles n'ont point voulu réfléchir que, tantôt pour sauver leurs familles, tantôt pour conserver leurs biens, et souvent pour obéir aux lois de la guerre sainte (*djéhad*), ces mêmes Arabes ... étaient forcés de se servir de leurs chevaux en raison des besoins qu'ils éprouvaient, des circonstances qui les dominaient; mais ils savaient parfaitement qu'il eût été préférable de ne point agir ainsi.²³⁵ (Abd El Kader and Daumas, 2008, pp. 151-152)

²³⁴ Field Notes 35, page 11 (3rd June, 2015). Translation: "You know the area, you know the people. You will find someone who is poor ... who buys a mule for 3000 dirhams ... a bad mule ... But what does he do? He needs a mule to find work ... to keep his family. He is only thinking of earning a little money and he goes without thinking about the mule. You know the mules who have died in the mountains. These are the mules of poor men, the men who have bought their mules for 3000 dirhams, 4000 dirhams.

²³⁵ Translation: "Many have concluded that this people had no knowledge of equestrian principles, refusing them even all love of the horse. This results from a failure to recognise that to save their families, to preserve their property and often in obedience to the laws of Jihad, these same Arabs ... were forced to use their horses according to the needs they were subject to and prevailing circumstances but they knew perfectly well that it was preferable not to act thus"



Figure 7.2: Hamed's mule is in a pitiful state. Emaciated and with multiple saddle sores she is not fit for work. She is exactly the kind of mule that falls when overloaded and working on steep passes. Hamed bought her for 4000 dirhams at the start of the season and was planning to sell her on at the end of the season.

How are we to know in ways that respect these contradictory tensions? We turn again to Hajj, who expressed strong disapproval of the young today who lack a work ethic and show little concern for the mule with serious, sometimes fatal consequences on the higher cols:

Le problème ... pour les enfants...lac d'Ifni ... le matin, le départ, ils prennent tous les bagages sur les mulets, ils parlent et chantent ... ils laissent partir. Quelque fois les mules ... Il trouve à la montée qu'il n'y a pas quelqu'un pour donner un coup de main pour monter. Alors, quelque fois ils tombent les mules ou les bagages.²³⁶

For the muleteer, all they can hope for is to escape from this existence. Saïd and his brother Mohamed escaped and now make their living from their carpet shops.

[Saïd]... had only once worked as a muleteer, taking luggage up to the refuge. He said that he had cried all the way as it was so hard. The luggage was very heavy and he struggled to move the paniers and rebalance the load. He tried to use his shoulder to lift the chwari but it was too heavy from him. At one point the mule went the wrong way and caught her load on a boulder. This caused her to fall down.

"It does not make sense for people to work for 100 dirhams a day doing this kind of work. It's too hard!" Speaking of his brother's time working as a muleteer, he said: "He just waste time. But what you can do with 100 dirhams? Before it's just 70, 75. It's not enough."²³⁷

Another village elder, explained that the best mules today come from the valleys that have not been reached by the road. There people still value a mule.

... before it was only old men that looked after mules and they would typically never allow their sons to touch let alone look after the mule. ... Now mules are bought and then given to someone to work. The relationship that exists between a man and his mule is thus no longer the same. As if to illustrate this, he said that when you used to travel up to Imlil from Asni and were invited in to eat somewhere, it was traditional to ask for food for your mule first.²³⁸

²³⁶ Field Notes 35, page 10 (3rd June, 2015). Translation: "The problem ... for the young ones ... the morning, when preparing for departure, they take the luggage and put it on the mules. They are talking and singing together and they let the mules head off. Sometimes the mules find that on the steep sections, there is no one to help them. So sometimes they fall, the mules and the luggage."

²³⁷ Field Notes 35, page 10 (3rd June, 2015).

²³⁸ Field Notes 31, page 17 (11th April, 2015).

Omar's story and testimonies from across the community paint a picture of a community, grown wealthy from tourism, who no longer value the animal caring roles that their fathers and grandfathers grew up with. Resenting the work, feeling judged, hoping for an escape all promote absencing. Both shepherding and muleteering are vocations that demand an affectivity born of a lifelong apprenticeship. To understand this better we turn to Mustapha as he starts out on a career as a muleteer.

7.3 *Mustapha's story*

Mustapha's story exemplifies the precarious and uncertain nature of a muleteer's existence today as he tries to find employment locally and the implications for mule welfare. It also captures how Mustapha turns to his mule, developing an awareness of his mule as an individual with whom a relationship can be forged rather than a simple tool of work.

Mustapha's father is desperately poor for he has little land to live off²³⁹ and just about scrapes by with occasional work collecting sand and gravel from the river bed. He did not want his eldest son to leave home and seek work in the city, preferring to buy him a mule for 4500 MAD, from a dealer on the Kik Plateau, so that he could go out and find work.

I first encountered Mustapha as he walked past a local carpet shop with his mule in a traditional bit. I sensed something was wrong; I saw the pained withdrawn expression on the mule's face:

The mouth did not look right and I saw blood over the gums. When I lifted the lips, my suspicions were confirmed. ... exploring the mouth, I found a nasty wound over the left bar extending in towards the frenulum.²⁴⁰

Horried by what I saw (Figures 7.3a-7.3b), I was keen to ensure that Mustapha understood that it was his use of the bit that had caused the injuries. Saïd, the aforementioned carpet seller from Mustapha's village, thought the blood was due to

²³⁹ The poorest families have seen their land divided up between the children, into smaller and smaller parcels.

²⁴⁰ Field Notes 27, page 35 (26th January, 2015).

leeches in the mule's mouth. The evidence, however, was clear for those open-minded enough to see: the oral examination and photographs clearly showed the injury caused by the bit cutting into the tissues under the tongue.

Mustapha's mule was old, thin and lame. Mustapha had only seen that she was reluctant, unwilling even, to work and had turned to the traditional bit as the answer. Downloading. With Brahim's help, Mustapha and his father were persuaded to send her to a local donkey and mule sanctuary. She was thus retired on the 31st January, a rare privilege for a mule! When, later, they asked for the mule back, claiming that they still owed the dealer 2000 MAD after making a down payment of 2500 MAD, the unfortunate economics of the situation were laid bare.

The sanctuary refused to return the mule to suffer further abuse. She therefore had to be purchased and signed over. Mustapha's father proved a tough negotiator, demanding that the mule be returned to him so that he could return it to the seller or that he receive 4000 MAD. The mule's welfare thus collided with that of her owner's, giving rise to a deeply troubling ethical dilemma that was finally resolved by compensating them for their loss²⁴¹. Four months later and Mustapha was again working a mule in a traditional bit (Figure 7.4a). A family member advised me that his father had used the money he received for their last mule as a down payment on this grey mule and that he would probably have to sell three of his sheep to erase his debt.

Examination of this mule revealed a wound in her mouth (Figure 7.4b). A second traditional bit was surrendered and the owners given a modern stainless-steel snaffle. They were also provided with a prototype bitless bridle that both Mustapha and his father learnt to lead and ride in (Figures 7.4c-7.4d) and that the mule was comfortable in (Figure 7.4e).

²⁴¹ This well-intentioned intervention was born of concern for the mule's welfare and a refusal to accept that this was excused by the family's economic situation. This represents a judgement, the kind of judgement that is often necessary to protect welfare and thereby structures the response of the family. This experience highlighted the lack of a structure in the village to protect mule and muleteer welfare.



Figures 7.3a-7.3b: Tracing the bleeding to its source: It is only through close attention to head carriage and facial expressions, coupled with recognition of the bleeding that I knew something was wrong. Where locals might dismiss such bleeding as due to leeches, my clinical training and experience meant that I knew the mule's pained expression was not consistent with leeches but with a more serious injury.





Figures 7.3c-7.3d: An oral examination established the cause of the bloody saliva (arrow). A wound is identified under the tongue, the mucosa has been removed, exposing the salivary gland.



Figure 7.3e: Mustapha is given a black head collar in which to lead his mule home. She looks withdrawn and dejected, a not uncommon expression in mules that are suffering, are in pain and have given up.



Figures 7.4a-7.4b: Mustapha leads his new mule in a traditional bit. The use of this bit makes leading look easy as mules learn to follow in order to avoid the pain and injury that these instruments inflict. These lie hidden in the mouth and must be shown to the owners for them to become aware of the problem that they have been conveniently discounting.





Figures 7.4c-7.4d: Mustapha leads his mule in her prototype bitless bridle whilst, a few days later, his father rides her into town in the same bridle.





Figure 7.4e: Mustapha's mule is comfortable in her bitless bridle. Her eyes are soft. She is calm, attentive and easy to work with.²⁴²

²⁴² Photo taken 11th June, 2015, during the first day of a two-day training trek.

It was suggested that Mustapha's lack of care of his mule arose from his having no personal investment in the mule. He himself agreed with this:

I asked Mustapha what his father was good at, with the mule, that he is not good at. He replied that his father is always stroking the mule. He admitted that, whilst his father does not overload his mule, he does put too much on. He volunteered that this was because it is his father who paid for the mule.²⁴³

Whilst Mustapha admits he mistreats his mule and does not value and care for her as his father does, he subsequently showed himself to be a gentle and considerate handler. This needs to be emphasised and explored further. Knowing Mustapha's mules cannot be understood without reference to the purpose(s) for which they were purchased and the family's contextual "hinterland". To better grasp the "fluidities, leakages and entanglements that make up the hinterland" (Law, 2004, p. 41) of mule welfare, we need to curiously and compassionately consider the iceberg of factors that lie behind the mule's injuries. As Mol (2002, pp. 53-54) argues, "the shift from an epistemological to a praxiographic appreciation of reality" changes that reality; "the new 'is' is one that is situated". She continues: "It doesn't say what it is in and of itself, for nothing ever 'is' alone. To be is to be related. The new talk about what is does not bracket the practicalities involved in enacting reality. It keeps them present."

Mule welfare cannot therefore be dissociated from the uncertainties and precarity of life as a muleteer. And yet, these realities can prevent the muleteer from being present, from meeting and knowing the mule. It is by being present in the moment, to the mule and to each other, that the muleteer finds himself on Buber's narrow ridge, "a genuine third alternative between subjectivity and objectivity" (Kramer, 2003, p. 78). It is when turning to and meeting genuinely, that dissociation happens. This is the letting go and letting come that Scharmer talks about. This becomes evident when turning to the other and engaging as *I-Thou*. When re-associating with lived reality (back in the World of *I-It*), one finds that the meeting has changed something.

In developing Mustapha's story further, I want to let go for a moment of his hopes, fears and frustrations. That is not because they are unimportant in understanding how he enacts welfare. They are important, representing barriers to seeing, to attending and to

²⁴³ Field Notes 36, page 18 (11th June, 2015).

meeting. I want, however, to redirect our focus to the *between*, to the moments when Mustapha *turns* and makes himself available to his mule and how he is transformed through these genuine meetings. In doing so, another Mustapha emerges.

Training treks with “Mustapha-Mule”

In June 2015, Mustapha undertook a training trek as part of an agency’s muleteering team during which he explored and demonstrated his ability to establish an understanding, and communicate, with his mule. Opening to the mule arguably allowed a new part of Mustapha to develop, a new Mustapha, or ‘Mustapha-Mule’ to emerge. We thus come to see that “identities are fragile and may differ between sites” (Mol, 2002, p. 43), that Mustapha is multiple or at least two, depending on whether he adopts an *I-It* or *I-Thou* stance.

In abandoning the bit and relinquishing control, Mustapha discovered that his mule was happy following the mule in front, leaving him to follow behind. He also discovered that, without the bit, he had to learn to anticipate and listen to her. She had more to say; he had more to listen to.

He stuck closely to his mule throughout that first day and his tendency to hold onto her tail (Figures 7.5a-7.5c) was noted. This is common practice locally but does not, necessarily, equate to listening. That evening:

Ellen asked why Mustapha was holding onto the tail. The first answer was that he was tired. Youssef then explained that people here do this and that it is a way of keeping contact with the mule.²⁴⁴

Keeping contact with the mule, here does not equate to dialogue for, whilst some information might be exchanged through the tail, it is limited where the handler has switched off, is being given a pull and is attending to their phone rather than to their mule. To what extent does it amount to inattention or absencing? It is certainly better than not maintaining contact²⁴⁵. As ever, there is more to proficient attending. Tail holding may be acceptable when the mule is following another mule and leadership is

²⁴⁴ Field Notes 36, page 18 (11th June, 2015).

²⁴⁵ As demonstrated by a team member who chose to walk apart and attended to his phone.

thus provided but does not allow a muleteer to intervene decisively when a mule needs calming, leadership or direction.

Mustapha and his colleagues (Omar, Mohamed and Abdelaziz) developed an embodied awareness of what it feels like to provide mules with leadership and a safe working environment (Figure 7.5d). During the training, they critically reflected on each other's practices, suspending old ways of thinking and exploring new perspectives prompted by action replays, taking on board advice and suggesting improvements. On one descent, for example, several mules left the path or cut corners, breaking into a trot and throwing luggage in the process (Figure 7.5e).

Mustapha thus had the opportunity to reflect on the behaviour and temperament of the different mules in the group, what might be needed to keep them calm (Figures 7.5f-7.5h) and how this could be achieved. In the case of Abdelaziz's mule, who tanked off downhill, they were able to appreciate how agitated she is when she becomes separated from the others²⁴⁶ and contrast this with how calm she is when being led. Rather than labelling her as difficult (downloading), they open their minds and hearts, discovering that she finds being led reassuring.

²⁴⁶ It was suggested that she fell behind because she was slower; she then reacts by trotting to catch the others up and, in doing so, throws some of her load.



Figures 7.5a-7.5b: Mustapha follows his mule and keeps contact with her by holding onto her tail. Omar (arrow) is absent, busy on his phone; he is not paying attention to his mule.





Figures 7.5c-7.5d: Mustapha's instinct was to follow his mule. Omar has fallen behind his mule. Neither were familiar with leading from the front; embodying this on the descent to Tizi Oussems was a new experience. Here, Mustapha fails to bring the reins down and applies a constant pull on one rein that is harder for the mule to understand as it does not let up. He is also pulling with his arm behind him, leaving him prone to a shoulder injury.





Figures 7.5e-7.5f: Abdelaziz's mule tanks off downhill to catch up with the mules below her. In doing so, she cuts corners and throws luggage (arrow). Abdelaziz had not realised that it is for him to provide the leadership she needs. Together we practice leading a mule on a difficult descent.





Figures 7.5g-7.5h: Abdelaziz's mule follows calmly behind him. Note the slack lead rope that serves as a listening device for mule and muleteer alike. Below, I demonstrate how holding the rope in my outside hand so that it crosses my body, ensures clear communication, a strong position and protects me from injury.



This was the first time Mustapha had been encouraged to critically reflect on his practice and consider what mules might be experiencing. The holding space provided by the training and review sessions allowed Mustapha the opportunity to see with fresh eyes and develop a feeling for what was important. He heard his peers commend the 'good connection' he has with his mule; he saw and experienced too the benefits:

At the col, we stopped and the film told the story of the team's efforts to catch their mules. Mustapha had little trouble and this was attributed by the group to his good contact with the mule. By contrast, Omar's mule again walked away from him and he had to ask me for help. I walked straight up to her and took hold of her head collar without needing to offer her the bread I had in my hand.²⁴⁷

Omar's mule is distrustful of him²⁴⁸. To develop the group's understanding of why this might be, it was necessary to show them that she does not associate Omar's approach with anything positive. Omar's lack of investment in his relationship with his mule therefore contrasted with the time Mustapha has invested in establishing a close relationship with his own mule (Figures 7.6a-7.6b).

Through moments like these, Mustapha's awareness of the inner world of mules, and of his mule in particular, grew; with this knowing, came attentiveness and caring. Rohr captures this way of knowing when he says that "you start knowing through, with and in somebody else. Your little 'I am' becomes 'we are'" (2015, p. 103). Mustapha was discovering his "capacity for mutuality" (Rohr; 2015; p.101).

²⁴⁷ Field Notes 36, page 23 (12th June, 2015).

²⁴⁸ She is largely cared for by his younger brother, Abdellatif. He, as the older brother, is sent out to work with her during the school holidays.



Figures 7.6a-7.6b: Mustapha enjoys an affectionate moment with his mule as he caresses her face after grooming her. Mutual reciprocity is established.



Such *I-Thou* moments cannot be sustained or held onto, however; for the *I-Thou* continually becomes *I-It* (Kramer; 2003; pp. 19-30) as individuals oscillate between these two attitudinal states. Transformations; however; are a work in progress: it is not enough to be shown the way, finding the path again is often difficult until one learns to resist the old ways of doing and thinking. Crossing the threshold stepping onto the invisible path is difficult, as Mustapha was to learn.

Mustapha's awareness of mule welfare developed as he acquired new insights into the subject and a feel for what was important. In October 2015, however, another injury was discovered in his mule's mouth (Figures 7.7a-7.7b). This was upsetting for all involved. Disbelief! Disappointment! A melee of emotions. Mustapha had tears in his eyes when he looked at me but could offer no explanation for what he had done.²⁴⁹ It was unclear why he had resorted to the bit but it is suspected that he may have succumbed to peer pressure and felt the need to resort to this device to force his mule to work when overloaded. The excuse he gave that his equipment had been stolen the previous day in the mule parking was plainly untrue: his mule is wearing the black head collar that Mustapha was given for his previous mule and it was this that he was left having to use for the rest of the trek when a third traditional bit was taken from him.

This time, there was no room for doubt, no leach could have caused this injury. The laceration to the lower jaw was deep and corresponded with the bit. It was also clear that this was not a 'difficult' or 'nasty' mule. Suspending judgement, seeing past the downloading that appears to justify the use of the traditional bit, redirecting one's attention to the alternatives allowed better conversations to happen. Conversations that could explore the multiplicity of contradictory narratives without needing to smooth them out and render them coherent (Law, 2004, p.60). Conversations that could accommodate contradictory emotions, thoughts and actions: the "partial connections" that can exist "within the same person" (Law; 2004; p. 64). The question is then perhaps one of how; following an *I-Thou* experience; new awareness is integrated into practice. The crucial word is perhaps "inclusion" (Law; 2004; p. 64) or

²⁴⁹ Field Notes 42, page 25 (12th October, 2015).



Figures 7.7a-7.7b: Mustapha and his mule are seen on the climb up from Mattat to the Tizi n'Oudite, in October 2015. Disappointment at seeing a traditional bit in the mule's mouth turned to horror when the injuries caused by the bit were identified.





Figures 7.7c-7.7d: The traditional bit is made of thin metal and can cut into the soft tissues of the mouth. The section arrowed is bloodied and was responsible for the injuries shown in Figure 7.7b. Below, in February 2017, the injuries have healed, leaving a scar. Mustapha has abandoned the traditional bit for good.



“integration” and “integrity” (Brown, 2015; McManus,, 2004). It is perhaps a search for wholeness (Buber, 2000), for the “holy” (Rohr, 2015).

In July 2016, Mustapha saw that Figures 7.7a-7.7c had been included in the Welfare Guidelines in Pictures book as examples of bad practice. He already had the alternatives – the equipment and the relationship he and his mule had co-created. He knew the path. It remained to be seen if he would seek it out and adopt it as his own. It was therefore especially satisfying to see him turn up for a training workshop; in February 2017, with his mule in her bitless bridle and to see him ably embodying best practice over the course of the next few days. The wound had healed (Figure 7.7d) and Mustapha had developed into an able and competent muleteer (Figure 7.8a). When asked how he felt about the injuries he had inflicted on his mule, he explained that, back then, he was just starting out as a muleteer and had little or no idea how to work with his mule. He therefore made lots of mistakes. He felt guilty about this but not shamed; he recognised that I was annoyed with his behaviour, not with him. And he felt proud of what they had achieved together (Figure 7.8b).

Significantly, Mustapha was on a training trek for the ground handler for Intrepid, World Challenge and Exodus. They had introduced a policy to ensure that all mules are worked in head collars and had purchased 38 head collars. Mustapha’s mule had been issued with one of these, together with a grooming brush. When asked what he was taking away as a lesson to remember from the training, Mustapha answered that he had learned where his mule enjoys being groomed and that it is important to avoid putting pressure over the bones. They had, in other words, connected established mutuality and a little part of her was now a part of him (Rohr, 2015, pp.140-141).

Mustapha’s story helps us understand the tangle of competing and often contradictory emotions, thoughts and practices that constitute the hinterland of muleteering practice and their impact on how muleteers know their mules and enact mule welfare. We get a sense too of the dissonance produced when experiencing the *between* as *I-Thou* and how this can be both transformative and unsettling. A sense too of the conflicts arising from the need to work a mule and care for her. And of the lack of guidance and mentoring available to young muleteers who do not inherit (Salmona, 1994) an affective relationship from their elders but are sent out to work and to make mistakes that are



Figure 7.8a: Mustapha's ability to lead his mule has developed considerably and his mule follows easily, with the rope slack between them.



Figure 7.8b: Mustapha is proud of what he and his mule have achieved together and stops to take a selfie. They have co-created and established a trusting relationship. He is comfortable leading her, she being led and his competency was recognised by his fellow muleteers and employers.

costly to mule and muleteer alike. Knowing the mule for Mustapha is thus profound, indescribable for it is born of the harsh realities of work but also of presencing (Scharmer, 2009), meeting genuinely (Buber, 2000), of that which lovingly flows in when faithfully opening up and hopefully holding on (Rohr, 2015, p. 107). How far might such knowing travel? (Law, 2004, pp. 3 and 63). How far does forsaking the bit for the *between* travel? Does it hold true:

- when moving from ground to ridden work?
- when moving from the training ground into the work place?
- in situations where *I-It* realities dominate?
- in sport and on the battlefield and in situations where human agendas dominate?
- When the desire and need to control come to the fore?

In short, would it have convinced the Emir Abd El Kader? To what extent do the values that inform the relationships, Ellen builds with the equines she trains hold true in the villages of the Atlas, where mules are worked and ridden by men? To explore these questions, we turn to Mohamed.

7.4 *Journeys with Mohamed*

So far, the reader has been asked to attend to the 'bit', to the 'between' that emerges when mule and handler meet genuinely, to the precarity of a muleteer's working life and to the various ways in which that reality is unsettled and transformed when the muleteer has opportunities to meet and dialogue with the mule. Meeting entails letting go, relinquishing control, surrendering power, suspending judgement and dialoguing. The journeys undertaken with Mohamed take this further, exploring how Mohamed turns to his mule and develops not just into Mohamed-Mule but into someone who can find this path repeatedly and guide others along a similar journey.

Mohamed is a young twenty-year-old whose family make their living from a small shop and renting out rooms in the gîte they have built. Mohamed has recently become a father; his own father previously worked as a shepherd and now runs the shop. The family has one mule, who is worked by Mohamed and his younger brother. Mohamed was encouraged by his employer, James Kniffen, of The Mountain People, to take an

interest in improving the welfare of his own mule and that of the mules they employed. This is the story of the co-sensing and co-creating journey undertaken by Mohamed. This story captures how a safe collective holding space (Scharmer, 2009, p. 412) was created in which a small team came together and supported Mohamed as he undertook a deep inquiry into how relations and working practices between man and mule could be transformed for himself, his family, his employer and his mule.

To do this, Mohamed had to give of himself. He listened attentively. He organised meetings for the muleteers from his village at which he spoke passionately. He put in hours of training to develop his groundwork and riding skills, he organised training treks, participating in three of these and organised and gave riding lessons. This is classical fast-cycle learning (Scharmer, 2009, p. 412) that constantly iterates the existing prototype and integrates feedback to improve practice. Mohamed's contribution is thus highly significant for he helped prototype strategic microcosms of change as a "landing strip for the emerging future" (Scharmer, 2009, pp. 416-421).

Mohamed's journey started with his exposure to the generative dialogue James and I engaged in about the challenges involved in improving mule welfare. Both Mohamed and his father attended the EPA workshop in March 2015 and, a few months later, Mohamed was taking lessons from Ellen. *Turning to* his mule came easily to Mohamed and in opening to her, he opened his mind and heart to her welfare. In integrating head, heart and hand (Scharmer, 2009, p. 421), he was discovering and embodying a different way of being and dialoguing with a mule.

Reporting on their early work together, Ellen describes Mohamed's early progress as his awareness of how his mule feels and communicates emerges:

The relatively simple tasks of grooming and picking up the mule's feet have been made possible with the increased level of understanding in behaviour that Mohamed has now developed. The first time he worked on grooming his mule and picking up her feet she was quite difficult and giving him warning signals to stop. However, by taking the right steps to make her more comfortable with him doing this, it has become very easy and enjoyable for them both.²⁵⁰

²⁵⁰ Cochrane (2015d, p. 19).

Ellen and Mohamed progressed from ground work onto riding. This was made possible by Mohamed's willingness to "let go" (Scharmer, 2009) of control, to "surrender" (Buber, 2000) and to explore new ways of communicating with his mule, as they emerged dialogically.

Mohamed has also worked hard on developing his groundwork and handling skills ... on using his body language and voice commands to communicate his intentions. He has been working on the ability to stop and turn his mule while leading her, and is also able to do this without anything on her head.²⁵¹

Communicating his intentions was something Mohamed could do gently for he was able to develop an awareness of, and feel for, his mule's response under his hands. His mule was listening and responding. Like a seam of mineral ore, this could be mined for Mohamed knew the value of such *I-Thou* moments. Mohamed progressed to leading his mule with a hand resting on the top of her neck (Figures 7.9a-7.9b) and could reproduce this degree of subtle dialogue when riding (Figures 7.9c-7.9k).

An improved understanding of communication when riding has developed Mohamed to the point where he is able to ride his mule without a bridle, that is to say, without anything on her head at all. ... The communication between himself and his mule is at the point where he can ask her to turn by placing his hands on her neck, and can ask her to stop by the use of a voice command. He has given a great example of more advanced work by performing trot to halt without a bridle.²⁵²

Genuine meeting is born of mutual reciprocity and unconditional trust between two uniquely whole persons (Kramer, 2003, p. 24). Mohamed's mule told us when this was absent, when Mohamed was not seeing her truly, when his "hinterland" got in the way. She was virtually blind in her left eye, making her wary of people behind her or approaching on her blind side. This had to be captured on film before Mohamed came to know this of his mule.

²⁵¹ Cochrane (2015d, p. 20).

²⁵² Cochrane (2015d, p. 21).



Figures 7.9a-7.9b: Mohamed leads his mule with his hand resting over her poll. Subtle directional indicators help her to understand when she is being asked to walk on and when she is being asked to turn.





Figures 7.9c-7.9d: When riding, Mohamed can ask her to turn around a series of poles with a gentle tap to her neck. Soon, just by raising his hand he can instigate a turn. This, however, is less efficient on her left side where her eyesight is deficient.





Figures 7.9e-7.9h: Initiating and sustaining trot without any form of head control.





Figures 7.9i-7.9k: The trot is controlled using hand and voice commands to communicate Mohamed's intention to turn and stop.



On a few occasions, Mohamed approached his mule quite suddenly on her blind side, without talking to or reassuring her. This frightened her, causing her to spook. She would slightly kick out, as she was aware something was there but didn't know it was Mohamed.²⁵³

Over a series of training treks, Mohamed learnt to recognise the need to empathise with her and adapt his behaviour so that she was not startled by his approach. This then helped us develop a similar awareness with his colleagues, during which he saw how they thought and how he no longer thought!

We then looked at Mohamed's mule and ... how he stopped his mule with his voice. They agreed that he had an excellent contact. ... There were other clips where his communication was not so good. They recognised that he had scared her but it took a while for them to recognise why. Their first suggestion was that maybe he had used the stick. They then suggested that he did have a stick in his hand when approaching her. Ellen asked what was particular about this mule. She had to ask specifically whether the mule could see Mohamed. Initially they said yes. It took them a while to recognise that she is blind in her left eye and that, because he did not speak to her, she did not know it was him approaching her. Ellen asked them how they thought the mule was feeling. They recognised that she was scared. Ellen pointed out that she calms down very quickly.²⁵⁴

Mohamed's muleteers recognise that mules fear sticks. In this instance, however, they had to suspend judgement and redirect their attention to what the mule was feeling and why. Over time, Mohamed came to understand that he needed to talk to his mule and indicate his intentions to her, especially if approaching from her blind spot. His awareness was growing and with it, trust. Mohamed was growing through developing that part of him that was part-mule. Growing through the other (Rohr, 2015, pp.140-141), developing Buber's dimension of the *between*, Law's of partial connections (2004, pp. 62-65).

During a later trek, Mohamed, in a hurry, did not place his mule's bridle correctly over her head, leaving the cheek strap over her left eye. When this was pointed out to him, he replied that it didn't matter as she was blind in that eye, prompting the question

²⁵³ Cochrane (2015d, p. 24).

²⁵⁴ Field Notes 36, p. 17 (11th June, 2015).

whether repeated stimulation of his own eyelashes was bothersome. He agreed that it would bother her, further developing his awareness of her World map. Mohamed was then able to share this awareness with his fellow muleteers to help them understand that all mules have blind spots, can be startled and are, indeed, unique persons.

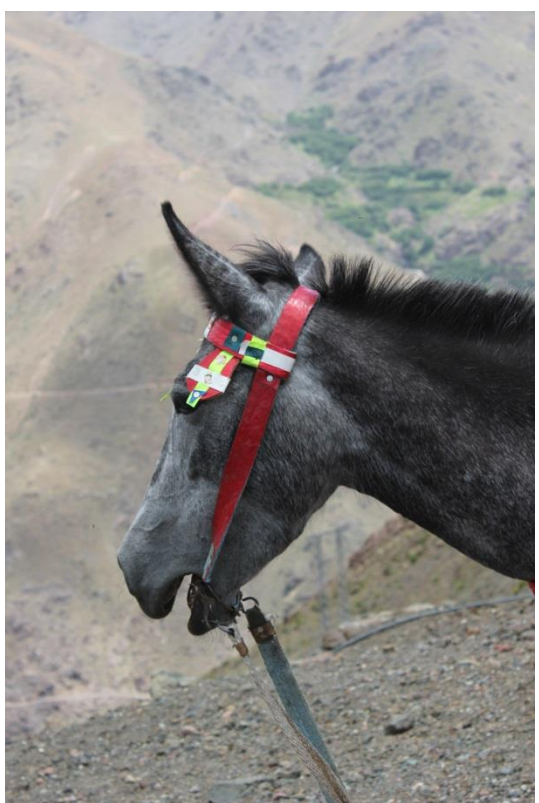
The degree to which Mohamed cares about mule welfare was well demonstrated during a training trek in July. On this occasion, we encountered Abdellatif who was setting out with a newly purchased, mule on a multi-day trek with a Canadian client. We encountered them on the Tizi Tamatert. There we saw a young grey mule with a traditional bit in her mouth; she was uncomfortable and breathing hard (Figures 7.10a-7.10f).

We did not have a head collar to give him. It was clear, however, that he wanted one and was willing to give up his traditional bit. Fortunately, and to our surprise, Mohamed stepped in and gave his own bitless bridle to Abdellatif. This meant that Mohamed would be continuing to Tachedirt with neither a head collar nor a bridle! He placed Abdellatif's bridle in his panniers and we all headed off together. At one point, he and Abdellatif held hands and it was clear that something significant had happened²⁵⁵

I suggest this was an *I-Thou* moment. Mohamed felt empathy for both Abdellatif and his mule. He persuaded Abdellatif that the bit is cruel and unnecessary. He overcame any cynicism or fear Abdellatif might have that his young mule might be difficult to manage and, in lending his equipment (Figure 7.11a), in letting go of any means of physically controlling his own mule, he turned to his mule and opened himself up to an emergent future. Mohamed thus surrenders himself to whatever the next few days of the trek will throw at him and sets out to explore ways of managing his mule with nothing on her head (Figures 7.11b-7.11d).

These experiences allowed Mohamed to prototype a good relationship with his own mule. This, in turn allowed him to provide instruction to muleteers who were to accompany him on treks with The Mountain People. Creating a holding space for training is not easy though: Mohamed had the support of his father and employer; he could afford to take time out from work. Many muleteers are reluctant to give up

²⁵⁵ Field Notes 38, page 16 (27th July, 2015).



Figures 7.10a-7.10d: Abdellatif's young mule looks uncomfortable. Her mouth is open, her nostrils are flared, she is breathing hard and her eyes have a worried look.



Figures 7.10e – 7.10f: The traditional bit has been secured to the bridle using twisted wire. Such repairs are termed *dépannage* by the owners whose only thought is to convenience. Little consideration is given to the mule's comfort and welfare; this is given little thought until their attention is drawn to it!





Figures 7.11a-7.11b: Mohamed and Abdellatif walk hand in hand; ahead of them Abdellatif's grey mule is wearing Mohamed's mule's bridle. Mohamed therefore manages his mule without any headwear. This helps develop his awareness by encouraging him to anticipate and manage potential hazards such as passing cars.





Figures 7.11c-7.11d: Approaching a steep descent, Mohamed guides his mule forwards with his arm cupping the side of her face. Further on, on the track, recognising that she loves thistles, he explores another way of asking her to move forwards.



their time - especially when they could be working or socialising - and, unlike Mohamed, are not easily persuaded of the merits of training.

The investment required to establish a relationship is significant. The significance of such an investment is perhaps best appreciated by considering the consequences that can manifest themselves when there is no trust. Ellen and Mohamed visited one mule who behaves aggressively when she sees or hears the traditional bit and saw the manifest absence (Law, 2004, pp. 84-85) of a good relationship:

... he explained that when someone approached with the traditional bit the mule was worse. ... The handler could approach the mule in her stable without any problems the first time. He then carried the bridle and shook it so that the mule could hear the bit. At this point, the mule turned to kick the handler but caught the door causing it to shut. When the door was reopened, the handler stayed on the outside of the stable and the mule proceeded to charge at him through the doorway. It was very clear that this mule knew what the traditional bit was and didn't want it in her mouth.²⁵⁶

The owner could not see the mule's fear, the mule's dislike of the bit and that he was betraying the relationship by insisting on the bit despite her protestations. Mohamed's awareness and understanding of the mule's fear meant that he could communicate this to the owner and help him turn to her and understand that there might be another path... Mohamed could not insist on this, however, for to do so takes us into yet another dimension, that of the mule as private property.

And yet he can do that at work. To understand this, we need to consider his role and his responsibilities as James's head muleteer. The company have a policy of no traditional bits and expect all their muleteers to work their mules in head collars or bitless bridles. Those who don't and who have not attended training, receive a lower daily rate than those who do. This gives Mohamed some leverage. Enforcing rules is easy. Training staff and helping them experience and develop a feel for best practice is more difficult for rules cannot influence an individual to turn to their mule. This knowing must be experienced. For this to happen holding spaces are needed in which muleteers and their mules can meet.

²⁵⁶ Cochrane (2015d, p. 12).

Mohamed's story shows us what is possible. Forsaking the bit for the *between* can travel from training to the work place, from ground work to riding and into situations where the desire and need to control (the *I-It*) dominate. The realities of work for Mohamed are tidy; he can resolve incoherences. His reality is one that can be centrally coordinated because he can, seek, enact and deliver a singular welfare (Law, 2004, p. 100). What happens however when, this is attempted in a larger company where a variety of truths, a multiplicity of welfares exposes incoherences? Samir's story allows us to explore this.

7.5 *Journeys with Samir*

Samir was, in 2015, the head muleteer for FFE's ground handler, MTM. Over the course of several training treks, he developed his awareness of his own muleteering practice, his role and responsibilities as head muleteer and how he could play his part in helping MTM implement the EPA Mule Welfare Charter.

I first met Samir at the EPA conference in March 2015 and then again in May 2015, when undertaking mule welfare audits for MTM. We subsequently met to discuss and plan training treks that would help them understand FFE's policy and implement it. These meetings highlighted the downloading that needed to be overcome to truly enter into a respectful and understanding relationship with the mule; they also highlighted the multiplicity of narratives in which mule welfare is entangled, the lack of coherence between these truths and the tensions arising when attempts are made to coordinate them.

Samir was good at articulating incoherencies. He was, for example, concerned about who would supply and pay for food and equipment:

I started by explaining that Chris had asked MTM to implement the mule charter and asked them what was needed to make it work. Karima had not yet explained the content of the charter to Samir but said that much of it had been covered at the conference. ...

Samir volunteered that he could be in charge of the muleteers and could check that they are loaded properly and that they do not use traditional bits. There was, however, a problem concerning the feeding of the mule:

“The only problem is that I can’t guarantee that all muleteers will feed his mule well. ... It is always about money! ...”²⁵⁷

The welfare standard stipulated was clear, unproblematic even. But it was problematic: How was it to be delivered? How was welfare to travel from the guidelines into the private domain of the muleteer? Samir explained that some muleteers could not afford the food.

We established that they all get paid the same but that each muleteer organises food for his mule separately. I suggested that they organise (purchase) the food collectively.

“Each muleteer he bring his own food for his mule. If they need they can buy.”

We established that they will typically provide three kgs of straw and three of barley (*tibben*) but that this depends on the muleteer’s budget (“it depends on his budget”). I explained that Chris wanted all mules fed adequately...²⁵⁸

The budget, it appears, was a private matter. Samir’s concern about the cost of feeding was neatly summarised by the following statement: “if the companies pay the money for the mule’s food, then you will see no weak mules in Imlil valley!”²⁵⁹ Feeding was not the only problem. Samir was also concerned about how to implement the rules about working the mules only in head collars and ensuring they were not ridden when loaded:

I emphasised that if the mule is not being ridden, she should be worked without a bit. Samir said this would be difficult as the mule will want to eat and it will take him a long time to reach the lunch stop.

“He can’t leave the mules alone, she will be slowly, slowly and he will lose a lot of time. If trekking and the mule without a bit ... always looking for something to eat ... With the bit, he can control her.”²⁶⁰

My suggestion that it is for muleteers to manage the time the mule spends browsing and keep her walking drew a response reflecting the perceived need to retain control:

²⁵⁷ Field Notes 34, page 7 (22nd May, 2015).

²⁵⁸ Field Notes 34, page 7 (22nd May, 2015).

²⁵⁹ Field Notes 40, page 29 (13th August, 2015) – statement made during a review session on a training trek.

²⁶⁰ Field Notes 34, pages 7-8 (22nd May, 2015).

“With his mule – she is always with the bit and he can control her.”²⁶¹

Samir continued affirming that it was not possible to trek with the mule without a bit because she is strong. The list of reasons why a mule cannot be managed in a head collar almost always includes descriptions of the mule as ‘strong’, ‘difficult’, ‘nasty’. Less common ideas included the belief that the bit protected the mules from inhaling cold air when up in the mountain. When asking Hassan, a muleteer with a young mule in Samir’s team why I had seen him working his mule in a traditional bit, he at first replied that it was because of the children in the group. Not satisfied with this,

I pressed him on why he was therefore using the traditional bit despite not carrying the children. “He use it because she is afraid of cars and buses. That’s why he use that one. To control it.” I pointed out that there were no buses or cars on the descent from Tizi Tamatert to Tinghourine. Hassan replied that “he use it because it is the first time”. This was closer to the truth.²⁶²

This downloading prevents the muleteers from rumbling with their story, from seeing and empathising with the mule in front of them; this is difficult to counter logically. A focus on their own need to reach a destination, for example, prevents them from recognising that mules are grazers and benefit from being allowed to snatch food throughout the day and chew it naturally. These understandings had to be explored with Samir in his own practice and, concurrently, with the muleteers for whom he was responsible. Would forsaking the bit and refocussing on the *between* travel? Yes and No. Sometimes it held, at other times, incoherences shone through...

These meetings and training sessions also highlighted the challenges involved in translating a welfare charter into meaningful change on the ground. Determining what was required and what this meant in practice, why it was necessary and who was responsible was not as straightforward as one might have expected. It is only when seeking to implement a guideline and ensuring that the underlying principle(s) of mule welfare is/are respected, that the assumptions and beliefs that resist change (on the one hand) and expect change without a full appreciation of the context (on the other hand) are exposed. Fostering dialogue was therefore always going to be challenging. Genuine

²⁶¹ Field Notes 34, pages 7-8 (22nd May, 2015).

²⁶² Field Notes 40, pages 16-17 (13th August, 2015).

dialogue is, however, born of genuine meeting (Buber, 2000); “to meet together, to flow together, to have ... a gathered meeting” is “to bring to-gether”, “to gather” (Law, 2004, p. 100). It is about holding coherency and incoherency in the same space and allowing that which lies between to emerge. And so, we return to the *between* and to the challenge of re-sepecting difference: How do we deal with the *between* that is born of difference? How do we hold the multiplicity of truths that arise in practice so that, rather than being subject to ontological politics they meet genuinely? The answer, I believe, lies in heading upstream, in respecting and surrendering to the wonder and mystery (Springsted, 1985; Rohr 2016) of the encounter, placing ourselves in the same room, on the same page and exchanging judgement for curiosity, cynicism for compassion and fear for courage.

In the office, Samir’s preference was to talk about general issues of exploitation including poor pay and overloading. The mule and the client were absent; he was less keen to scrutinise his own practice. The tendency to blame others allows individuals to ignore what they are themselves responsible for. They do not head upstream.

When you blame others, you take the focus off the only person you have any power over: yourself. You become either the persecutor or the victim. When you make excuses for your own behaviour or blame others, you dissociate yourself from self-evaluation and ownership. You therefore become powerless to change. (Wagner, 1986, p.50)

The conversational model of blaming others prevents groups from capturing the social complexities that matter most: seeing themselves as part of the system at issue. (Scharmer, 2009, p. 284)

Blaming mules for being stubborn and difficult, blaming employers for failing to provide fair working conditions! Neither allows dialogue to be engaged and common understanding explored. Breaking out of these entrenched positions and opening one’s heart to the other is an essential part of the co-sensing journey that brings new awareness and new possibilities. Samir and his team achieved this with their mules, they hope, in turn, that their struggles are understood and taken seriously. Transforming local practice therefore requires us to engage muleteers in self-evaluation and critical reflection whilst providing them with opportunities to embody new ways of working. This became possible by taking teams away on training treks and breaking the ingrained habits of thinking and doing that is part of their muleteering. It also requires

them to let go of their beliefs and assumptions, their identities as victims and often their pride. And it requires them to be heard. The challenge here is that this is more than two-way reciprocity, it is reciprocity across the wider community.

Over the course of five training treks²⁶³ undertaken for MTM, Samir undertook welfare assessments, had his team work their mules in head collars and had them reviewing the muleteering practice captured on film at the end of each day. These practices were unfamiliar and unsettling, encouraging him to question assumptions and see afresh. Taking off pack saddles before departure (Figures 7.12a-7.12b), assessing behaviour, working out who had the best relationship with their mule, body scoring the mules, checking them for wounds and identifying the cause of any wounds found, checking the mules for lameness and other problems were all disruptive changes to Samir's routine and to that of his team. By the end of the first training trek, in June 2015, he had accepted that mules could indeed be worked in head collars. He let go of his cynicism, reluctantly agreeing to take his mule's bridle off and let her show him what she could really do (Figures 7.13a-7.13b). In doing so, he discovered that she enjoyed feeding and drinking and could easily be kept moving on. He learnt that when ascending a valley, mules will snatch leaves from the shrubs and trees beside the path but these plants thin out as height is gained (Figures 7.13c-7.13f). They therefore need only pay attention to and lead their mules on these lower sections. Different ways of working, of attending to the mule. Extra work, harder work. Extra responsibilities. All to meet the expectations of clients. All without any improvements to their pay, working conditions and prospects.

²⁶³ Dates: 7th-8th June, 27th-28th July, 2nd-3rd August, 13th-15th August and 11th-12th October, 2015.



Figures 7.12a-7.12b: Prior to departure on a training trek, Samir (in purple) inspects each mule. In doing so, he assesses body condition, wounds and the quality of the relationship between mule and handler. Below, Abdellatif's young mule stands calmly beside him during her examination, evidencing the trust between them.





Figures 7.13a-7.13b: Tosca, the chestnut mule can express herself, snatch mouthfuls of food as she moves along the path, something that is denied Samir's mule who starts the trek with a bit in her mouth.





Figures 7.13c-7.13d: Samir is persuaded to remove the bridle from his mule and continue with her wearing only a headcollar. Her instinct to feed is then unveiled as is the ease with which she can be kept moving.





Figures 7.13e-7.13f: Higher up the valley, there is less opportunity to feed and Samir's mule walks on without stopping. The path descending from the Tizi Mzik passes through an old juniper forest and the mules have no opportunity to graze. They therefore keep moving.





Figure 7.14: Samir's team pass a group of muleteers, from the Oussertek area, who have chosen to ride their already overloaded mules. The mules are also being ridden in traditional bits. Work is harder to find for the men from this relatively remote valley and they are therefore probably easier to exploit. The muleteers do not have access to alternative equipment and training and are, perhaps, unaware of the damage they are doing to their mules by overloading them. They are therefore unaware of the role they are playing in the system that weighs so heavily on the mule.

Samir and his colleague's co-sensing journey allowed them to develop greater awareness of individual mules and of what they can do to improve welfare. The journeys also brought them into contact with extreme examples of poor welfare, including biting injuries (Figures 7.7a-7.7c) and handlers riding their loaded mules (Figure 7.14).

These examples met with their disapproval and helped them see that owners do themselves carry a significant responsibility towards the mule. In judging those muleteers for enacting poor welfare, their lack of access to equipment and training, the precarious nature of their working lives and the extent to which the wider industry exploits them is 'othered' (Law, 2004, pp. 83-85). Injustice is justifiably felt towards the agencies who pay their muleteers as little as 80 dirhams per day, do not help with the provision of food, provide no social security for the muleteers, no insurance or health care for the mules and who do not have rules to prevent overloading and other abuses. This is an allegory for the mule's mistreatment and exploitation. Indeed, these issues loom larger in the minds of the muleteer than the less visible concerns that might preoccupy their mules. The muleteers' concerns thus get in the way of seeing and knowing the mule. They are not separate matters, however; they are part of the whole, to which we must be present, if we are to truly see. There is thus a need for meeting and dialogue both between the muleteers and the agencies and, in parallel, between the muleteers and their mules.

7.6 *Conclusion*

This chapter has, through journeys with Omar, Mustapha, Mohamed, Samir and others, captured the multiplicity of ways in which muleteers know their mules and enact mule welfare. The muleteers' view of welfare is limited by their ability "to see their reality with a new eye and heart" (Rohr, 2016, p. 115): limited by their judgements and fear of mules and by their own perspectives on the complex network of relationships and injustices that they and their mules are caught up in and subjected to. Until now they have been given little opportunity to share their story and be heard. They have been kept at arm's length, unable to fully appreciate their own role within this network and the responsibilities that they bear as co-creators of the system. The blame culture that many resort to makes it difficult to empathise and develop a deeper awareness of the whole system and of their place and role within that system.

Awareness of self is also limiting. It is, by failing to develop the necessary self-awareness that would allow them to take responsibility for their own choices that they too, in many cases, continue to subject the mule to the same oppression that they are subjected to. In absencing themselves from this greater awareness, they allow a dysfunctional system to persist. Ultimately, it is only through dialogue with the mule (on the one hand) and with the agencies and their clients (on the other), that alternatives can be prototyped and enacted. That, however, is unlikely to happen whilst the system is unwilling to listen to and hear their story. It is to the agencies' attempts to deliver improvements in mule welfare that we therefore turn next.

FROM THE MULE LOCAL TO THE MULE GLOBAL

Attending to the Movement Between Realities

Before I met Glen, I thought most of the mules in Imlil were quite well looked after, and they are, compared to those used in the city, but you don't always know something is wrong until someone points it out. Once it's pointed out you can do something about it. We can tell a mule that's clearly very badly treated but we can't tell a mule that's perhaps beginning to lose weight through mouth sores because we just don't have the experience.

Agency Owner²⁶⁴

²⁶⁴ Workman (2014, p. 58)

8.1 Introduction

I have explored how the traditional bit enacts relationships and how forsaking the bit for genuine dialogue allows a very different kind of relationship to emerge. We have seen that this can travel from ground work to riding, from training courses into working practices and even from handler to handler. Integrating the transformation of self that occurs in *I-Thou* encounters back into the World of *I-It* presents challenges for each practitioner, as they try to make sense of any new awareness gained and apply it in practice, within the unique relationship they forge with their own mule. But can this be scaled up across a team and, ultimately, across an industry? How, in other words do such truths travel from the local to the global? How are good relationships to be fostered? Can they be prescribed from afar? It is in coordinating relationships that multiplicity becomes apparent for actors are “entities, human or otherwise that happen to act. They are not given but ... emerge in relations” (Law, 2004, p. 102). If identities are fragile and differ between sites (Moll, 2002, p. 43), relational practices are equally fluid, differing between partnerships and even within partnerships, when we consider the multiple geographical places in which they appear – public / private, home / work, etc. This chapter explores multiplicity and ontological disjunctions as they arise in the practice of enacting a coordinated welfare or failing to do so.

Attempts to standardise welfare in the work-place must encounter and deal with different truths as they are enacted and constructed in practice. Where a dialogical approach can hold the tension born of difference, I argue here that this tension is all-too-easily othered in the rush to rationalise and resolve contradictions and arrive at objective decisions and actions. It is in this rush that the exercise of power imposes one ontology over another (the muleteer’s over the mule’s, the agency’s over the muleteer’s) rather than co-creating outcomes dialogically. Strategies to co-ordinate a good reality (Law, 2004, p. 100), a reality in the singular, thus figure strongly in the workplace. They tidy things up through the imposition of a master narrative.

This chapter therefore explores the incoherency of narratives constructed in different cultures and places by attending to the journeys undertaken with travel agencies seeking to develop and implement mule welfare policies. We start by exploring why the mule and mule welfare are invisible, how they become more visible and the disquiet this

gives rise to as this new awareness unsettles established narratives. We then consider the ontological disjunctions that arise and then disappear.

8.2 *Prototyping Ways of Seeing with the Agencies*

My first attempt to develop co-seeing and co-sensing journeys was disappointing. Like most prototypes it failed (Scharmer, 2009, p. 210, 418) but these experiences threw light on the barriers to awareness that must be overcome if agencies are to recognise absencing, stay present to, and appreciate their role in co-creating, the problem. This awareness can then give rise to a search for solutions and the development of response-ability (Goodwin, 2011, p. 33). If courage is required to attend to the unpalatable, it is faith that sustains on the uncertain journey towards resolution. Prototyping ways of seeing inevitably encounters narratives that sustain power imbalances and normalise them. Attending to the way agencies see the mule thus allows us to understand how mules and mule welfare are *othered*. This, in turn, allows us to explore how agencies learn to see, know, care about and take responsibility for the welfare that they co-create.

The mule's reality needs to be actively explored; this means visiting them at home and at work, listening to their stories, looking in their mouths and under their pack saddles, getting into their world maps. This simply does not happen. It is all too easy for a better story to be substituted for the mule's. Thus, in the quote at the front of this chapter, an agency owner allows himself to say that the mules aren't as bad as those in the cities, failing to recognise that the comparison is invalid because the mules working in the mountains will eventually be sold to the cities: This renders invisible the fact that the ways in which the mule is exploited by the mountain tourism industry is unsustainable, inexorably grinding the mule down until the day comes when they are traded in for a younger, fitter²⁶⁵, less arthritic mule.

None of the agencies had ever conducted an audit of the mules it employs and were therefore unaware of the many welfare issues that they were unwitting co-creators of. The agency that withdrew from this study provided me with access to their operation

²⁶⁵ Fitter, here, should be understood to encompass an absence of all the health and welfare problems a mule develops through being kept in such a way that its basic needs are not met. This results in dental problems, dietary inefficiency, weight loss, wounds, arthritis, lameness, etc.

and were shocked and perturbed by what I reported. Recognising that mule welfare is invisible to trekking agencies, leads one to ask how they see mules and mule welfare and how they could see better.

Auditing provides one possible answer (Blakeway and Cousquer, forthcoming; Burn et al, 2009; Cousquer, 2015). Auditing, however, is both a powerful and a limiting tool (Law, 2004, p. 8; Power, 1997), an inscription device that produces singularity. For one, it is a specialist exercise when undertaken skilfully and artfully simply because the auditor knows where to look, how to look and what to look for (Figures 8.1a-8.1b). These ways of looking can be shared and taught as part of a co-sensing journey, providing an organisation decides to invest time and effort in this training and recognises that they need to develop their own sense organs. This then allows welfare to become more visible. Whether the looking is undertaken by an expert or is conducted in-house, it inevitably yields information that transforms awareness and raises questions about how to act on that information. Awarenesses meet but how do they meet? What form does this encounter between ways of knowing the mule take? The results of the audit must either be rejected, resisted or accepted and, if the latter, interpreted and acted on in context. The outcome, however, depends on how the findings speak to that context. Can they meet and achieve dialogue? If the answer is yes, the meeting is transformative; mismetings, however, allow ontological disjunctions to avoid each other and persist.

The audit conducted in early 2014, of some of the regular local muleteers working for one agency showed that, of 21 mules examined, eight (38%) were being worked in traditional bits and that, of these, five had biting injuries to their mouths (Figures 5.4b-5.4c and 8.1b). The report thus highlighted the large number of muleteers who were



Figure 8.1a: This old mule's tongue is deformed, showing evidence of trauma from historical use of the bit. It takes an oral exam under sedation and using a gag to render the damage to the tongue visible. Visibility is further enhanced by capturing the damage photographically and most importantly by the presence of the owners and staff.



Figure 8.1b: Biting injuries to the bars of the mouth in another of the mules working for the agency²⁶⁶ are made visible as part of an oral examination and through photographic documentation and reporting.

²⁶⁶ Field Notes 8, page 15 (1st May, 2014).

working their mules in this way and the suffering that resulted from this. Awareness yes but only of partial truths. The report did not make visible the nature of the relationship between these men and their mules²⁶⁷, nor did it help develop an awareness of the agency's lack of policies, systems and procedures for recruiting suitably qualified staff, training them and working with them to develop an acceptable standard of mule care and muleteering practice. These aspects only emerged over time.

Auditing and reporting thus raised awareness of issues (or indicators of issues) without identifying the underlying causes or providing answers. Spot checks similarly highlighted issues of concern that the company was unaware of but responsible for: In the case of the mule pictured in Figures 8.2a-8.2c, no one appeared to see that she had a sublingual abscess and was struggling to eat, in pain and unfit to work. When the problem was drawn to the attention of agency staff, no action was taken. The mule was loaded and allowed to head off on a multi-day trek with a group of clients. The unacceptability of her welfare somehow co-existed with the company's responsible outlook and their need to deliver the services they had sold. Somehow welfare was acceptable and not acceptable: ontological disjunction.

In such cases, it is easy to judge that this is unacceptable. For me, and arguably for the mule, it was. But to understand the situation, one must suspend judgement and exercise curiosity. One has to create a space to hear and understand the other. It is thus through dialogue that a richer understanding of contexts, perspectives and ontologies becomes visible. This can perhaps best be understood by considering the implications of declaring a mule unfit for work and thereby refusing their owner work.

Refusing someone work because they are working their mule in a traditional bit or because their mule is unfit to work is problematic: Such decisions have consequences for owners and their ability to provide for their families and mules. This was made apparent when a mule, presenting for work wearing a traditional bit, was found to be severely lame. Knowing that the bit is often used to force a lame mule to walk on despite the pain they are suffering gives rise to an ethical dilemma. Does one refuse

²⁶⁷ Nor did it go further upstream to examine the nature of the relationship between the muleteers and the agency's owners. The nature of these relationships therefore was othered; it stayed in the background with attention being paid to the visible problems.

work? Does one offer work providing the traditional bit is abandoned? Does one turn a blind eye? The local agency staff, in this case, chose to turn a blind eye.

I pointed this out to Omar and he said that there was not much they could do about it as the clients had already left and the mule had to catch them up and the muleteer was due to prepare them lunch. Apparently, they would not be able to find a replacement chef / muleteer in time. I said that this was not acceptable and that the mule should not be working. He said that the mule would not go too far (lunch would be at the half way point) and that they would not employ the mule again.

Later that afternoon, I saw the mule returning back down the path to Imlil. She was ... 4/5 lame and when I flexed the carpal joint, there was a pronounced pain reaction. The arthritic joint could not be flexed ... these were clearly chronic changes²⁶⁸.

Saïd, the muleteer's brother spoke to me on the phone and told me that his brother was poor and had four children and a wife at home to feed. I explained to him that the mule had a chronic elbow arthritis and was no good to work. Saïd said that he would try to find a replacement mule for his brother but that he needed to work over the next month. He asked me to persuade the hotel of this. I said that the mule was not fit to work, especially in the mountains.²⁶⁹

Awareness of this mule's suffering and of the implications of refusing the owner work poses challenging questions. Solutions are not apparent, certainly in the short term. And, given such a complex issue, it is understandable why there is a reluctance to address it. Any answers to such a dilemma take time and effort to develop. Where an agency feels it has a responsibility to provide work to locals in a non-discriminatory way, this makes clear unambiguous rules on animal welfare hard to introduce and enforce. Refusing work appears to disadvantage the poor for whom there is no safety net; it also tests human ties and loyalties. At the same time, attempts to purchase and retire the mule are not sustainable, inviting those who would take advantage to come forward. An agency owner articulates this concern well when affirming that whilst he "would like mules to be fit for work ... people will be bringing sick mules to

²⁶⁸ See video.

²⁶⁹ Field Notes 29, page 37 (6th March, 2015).



Figures 8.2a-8.2c: When a mule turns up for work with bloody saliva drooling from her mouth (red arrows), what should happen? Do staff examine her and establish that she has an abscess under her tongue and is struggling to eat and therefore unfit to work or do they ignore the problem and load her up as usual? In this case, the lack of awareness, the lack of alternatives and the lack of policies meant that this mule accompanied the agency's group on a multi-day trek.

work all the time if they can be paid for not working”. He concludes that this is a more complex problem that needs discussion.

Acting to address a problem without an awareness of its wider context can thus shift the problem, yielding further challenges and problems²⁷⁰. When prototyping solutions, we therefore have to accept that the “0.8 solution” (Scharmer, 2009, p. 210) will by definition be imperfect and needs to be sheltered from criticism so that important lessons are learnt. It is about failing early to learn quickly. Thus, it is argued here, the insistence that animal welfare be respected cannot exist in a vacuum.

Myriem Naji (2016) describes similar concerns about the wider consequences of addressing the exploitation of women working in the Moroccan carpet industry. Naji highlights the various ways that the exploitation of weavers is rendered invisible by the traders and middlemen, whilst drawing attention to the potential impact on the livelihood of families of breaking the network of middlemen. This is, in part, because it is through these middlemen (in the case of carpetmakers) and agencies (in the case of mules and muleteers) that products and services are made available.

Auditing and reporting are thus ways of seeing that help raise awareness of welfare issues. They help us re-spect the relationships within which welfare is enacted. They do not, however, contribute actively to the development of solutions. Moving from awareness of the issue to addressing the issue confronts us with the challenge of bridging “the gap between knowing and doing that befuddles so many change efforts” (Reason and Bradbury, 2008, p. 1). My role involves supporting partners in both attending to and bridging that gap; it involves coming alongside partner organisations to help them undertake their own inquiry. An appreciation of this difference is important for it distinguishes ‘inquiring on’ from ‘inquiring with’.

For this to happen training and support are needed to help those involved develop their own solutions in line with their understanding of their role and responsibilities and the welfare principles that they are seeking to support. Awareness of the problem and its solutions thus addresses “the two widely regarded conditions that free an individual of

²⁷⁰ In Imlil, this is perhaps best illustrated by the discovery that the provision of an ambulance and ambulance driver had helped address the problem of how to get a patient to hospital. It, however, created a new problem as the patient could not travel back by ambulance if they died in hospital. The provision of an ambulance thus gave rise to a need for a hearse!

his or her responsibility: ignorance and inability.” (Fennell, 2006, p. 109). Moving beyond awareness of the issue, of the reasons for the issue existing and of its significance thus confront us with its solvability. This leads us to focus, more specifically, on how the *between* is enacted by agencies and how attempts to improve the relationships and practices within which welfare is enacted encountered the mule multiple²⁷¹.

8.3 *Prototyping Solutions with the Agencies*

If welfare problems result from an imbalance between exploitation and our ability to turn to and attend to the other, an unhealthy *I-It/I-Thou* or *mismetings/meetings* ratio, they are born of the *between*. If actors are not given but emerge in relations (Law, 2004, p. 102), the *between* is similarly co-constituted; there is thus a complex inter-relationship between a person’s ability to attend and the quality of relations and welfare they create. In attempting to prototype better relations between mule and muleteer with the agencies, it is therefore helpful to focus on how prototyping solutions eventually transformed meetings, dialogue and relationships.

In doing so parallels are inevitably drawn with the way power over the subordinate muleteer is used to exploit their labour. Surrendering control opens a space for attending and for the new to emerge, a perceived need to retain control can, however, result in mismetings. Community dialogue is understandably hard to achieve. The following examples involved initiatives to improve welfare through improving muleteer pay and watering facilities and the provision of humane tethers and head collars.

8.3.1 *Muleteer Pay and Water Troughs*

Money and water are important resources, access to which has consequences for a muleteer’s ability to meet some of his mule’s essential needs. Attempts to rethink the provision of these two resources reveals much about underlying relationships. The lack of awareness surrounding the adequacy of the salary paid to muleteers and how it impacts on mule welfare is striking. An old geography textbook provided an insight into this:

²⁷¹ The multiplicity of ways mules are known and cared for, the multiplicity of mule welfares.

The *Forward in Geography* Level 2 textbook²⁷² ... says (p. 13):

"Trek costs per day:

Mule and driver 75dh, Mountain guide 160dh, cook 70dh, porter 50dh, shelter 45dh, breakfast 15dh, dinner 40dh."

Within the text on the same page it says that "the mule driver has his own mule and this carries the fodder for all the mules".²⁷³

In twenty years, the daily rate had barely increased by 25 MAD (an increase of 33%) and, of this, 10 MAD is taken by the head muleteer who organises the mules. Whilst the country's low inflation may have kept prices down, the muleteers have been left behind. A cook, for example, can now expect to earn 200 MAD whereas a guide can expect to earn between 250 and 700 MAD per day ²⁷⁴. One agency claimed to be taking this issue seriously in their official publications, claiming that they had increased the rate they pay to 120 dirhams (Workman, 2014, p.59)²⁷⁵. The asymmetry of this welfare enactment is obscured: It was not arrived at by consulting the mules and muleteers to determine what might be equitable; instead, it was enacted unilaterally. Why were they still paying less than other local agencies? Why had they not set an example by paying 150 dirhams²⁷⁶? Why were they were making out that they were being generous and ground-breaking when they clearly were not? Was this pay rise more about trying to look good, whilst maintaining the status quo? It would appear so. Celebrating small incremental improvements obscures the way these improvements perpetuate exploitative systems rather than re-inventing or indeed breaking them. Radical actions such as paying muleteers directly thereby bypassing the middle man who takes a 10% cut were not envisaged. It is argued that agencies cannot increase the daily rate because this would make their product uncompetitive. Agencies claim they have to keep their daily rate for clients below 50 Euros per person and argue that this prevents them paying a fairer wage to their muleteers. A glimpse of the relationship between agency

²⁷² Entitled *Places, Mapwork and Skills* by Stuart May, Paula Richardson and David Waugh, published in 1996 by Nelson.

²⁷³ Field Notes 2, pages 25-26 (18th December, 2013).

²⁷⁴ Geus (2007, p. 44) lists the muleteer's salary if working for an agency as 85 dirhams per day. If employed directly, he can expect to receive 120 dirhams per day and if cooking too, 200 dirhams per day. The daily rate for a guide in 2007 is listed as 300 dirhams.

²⁷⁵ Or at least "championing a minimum rate of 120 dirhams". It is unclear if this had been introduced.

²⁷⁶ As recommended by Des Clark, of Nomadic Morocco, for example. Personal Communication during a workshop on pack mule welfare, given at the BAIML AGM, December 2014, Chamonix, France.

and client perhaps but also of an unwillingness to reimagine the situation and make a selling point of equitable employment practices. There is no crafting. The boundaries between presence, manifest absence and otherness are, in the absence of entrepreneurial spirit willing to contest realities, preserved. Exploitation continues to be othered. This is what the model demands. Small steps, positive steps, welcome steps; no revolutionary change, no re-specting, no resolution.

Thirst too can be rendered invisible. Othered. This is welfare enacted. The construction of water troughs went some way to confounding this, allowing mules to express their thirst. The construction of three water troughs for the village was undertaken swiftly (Workman, 2014, p. 61), transforming local mules' access to water and the watering practices of local muleteers overnight (Figures 8.3a-8.3b). And the local mules exercised their agency by actively seeking out the watering opportunity, pulling their handlers and riders, physically stopping to drink²⁷⁷. Suddenly, the thirst and dehydration that had been normalised and othered was made present by the gathering together of water trough and mule. Together they spoke. Dehydration is detectable clinically (Freeman et al, 1999; Pritchard et al, 2005) but is not something that owners or agencies are in the habit of assessing or attending to. Thirst prompts a mule to seek water and this behaviour provides clear easy-to-interpret messages that owners can learn to read (Figure 8.4). Watering points allow mules to show their thirst and challenge owners' beliefs that mules should not be watered in the morning after a meal of barley. The mule can thus demonstrate their preference and the fact that they rarely suffer negative consequences if allowed to drink. The prototyping of this solution thus promoted dialogue, transforming practices and beliefs. The production of humane tethers was, by contrast, unsuccessful.

8.3.2 *Humane Tethers*

The production of 300 humane tethers (Brager, 2005; Cousquer and Alyakine, 2012) was financed and undertaken by one agency for distribution to the local muleteers. No clear policy was developed and implemented, however, to ensure that old tethering practices were abandoned and mules only tethered in such a way that they were

²⁷⁷ In many cases, this involves the mule pulling off the path and moving towards the water trough.

protected from injury and discomfort. This probably reflects the lack of thought²⁷⁸ going into how an issue needed to be communicated to all parties involved for the desired change in practice to take effect. It also reflects a strategic failure to distinguish between interventions at a community level and interventions (such as policy development and implementation) directed solely at those working for the agency.

The advantages of the humane tether to the muleteer were equivocal and this intervention did little to transform the relationship. Muleteers tether their mules for their own convenience so that they are ready for work. The mule's interests and preferences figure little in this decision, which is why mules are commonly left tethered without food, water, shade, companionship and the ability to avoid biting flies. The physical and psychological trauma and distress that tethering gives rise to are most evident when the owner, having tethered his mule, disappears off to the café. Suffering is thus invisible and the mule's ability to call attention to it limited by the owner's absencing. Mules do not clearly demonstrate their preference for a comfortable tether²⁷⁹ in the way that they communicate their thirst. When the invisibility and illegibility of suffering are bundled together with the efficiency of tethering practices, it is hardly surprising that the hinterland of assumptions are othered and practices are not transformed (Figure 8.5). The denial of freedom and welfare are thus normalised. Two ways of knowing, two ontologies. For these to be bridged, an empathic choice must be made on the mule's behalf.

Knowing the mule, knowing their thirst and their distress when tethered are born of empathic leaps that require a certain turning toward the mule. Who is responsible for that turning, however? Who should anticipate and prevent their suffering the muleteer or the agency? Is this responsibility not a shared one, whose settlement is born of dialogue? We are all, after all, capable of turning to the mule.

²⁷⁸ On my part.

²⁷⁹ In a way that the owner can see and understand.



Figure 8.3a: A mule carrying suitcases down to the village stops to drink. The availability of water at a bend in the path thus transforms local watering practices.



Figure 8.3b: Brahim and a friend water their mules at the water trough constructed on the path up to Achayn from Imlil whilst studying a sign on the problems associated with the traditional bit, erected above the water.



Figure 8.4: Omar's mule is sniffing at an earthenware cup that is used by humans to drink from the tap (arrow). She is thirsty. Omar, however, is oblivious to her thirst for he does not offer her water in the morning and has normalised this as part of his practice.



Figure 8.5: This calm old mule is seen tethered to a post in May 2015. Her handlers have failed to use either the humane tethers or the head collar, both of which are acceptable alternatives to tethering with a thin piece of nylon rope. Who is responsible for the failure, the handlers or their employers who are best placed to set standards?

8.3.3 Head collars

Transforming relationships and encouraging staff to abandon old habits and practices is difficult. If this was true of tethering, it was even more so of the use of the bit and bridle. Attending to these allows us to explore how agencies enact relationships with the mule.

Head collars and bitless bridles were purchased²⁸⁰ by one agency, whose owner was keen to prototype better relations with their own mules and those they employed. A specialist in training equines to work in bitless bridles was invited to stay and train mules and muleteers to work in head collars. The mules adapted well but a collective awareness of the benefits to the mule and muleteer was not established and the agency's staff were neither persuaded nor instructed to adopt this way of working. This can be explained in many ways. The following points do not therefore presume to explain everything. They do, however, provide insights into how far forsaking the bit for the *between* travels.

One agency owner, when asked why their mule was being worked in a bit rather than a head collar (Figure 8.6), replied that, if there was a chance of her being ridden by a client she would have a bit. "There are so many different views on bits and head collars" he said, highlighting that, whilst he hoped she would have only a head collar if carrying luggage, there was a concern about accidents if the mule was ridden. The mule, in question was on this occasion wearing both a head collar and bridle and was being walked loaded without a rider. She was being denied the opportunity to chew the food she wanted to eat. She was not seen as a *Thou* with needs and wishes, instead these were discounted and she was objectified.

The insistence on her being worked in this way was perhaps down to the local manager giving instructions to this effect. His resistance²⁸¹ to the use of head collars appeared to be present from the start. In June 2014, he stated that mules who are afraid of their owners will not follow in head collars. He claimed that his staff were taking too long when working with head collars and that the wet paths necessitated the use of the bit. He was also of the view that a bit was essential when working with a mule in the

²⁸⁰ A significant financial commitment for the agency's owners.

²⁸¹ Based on judgement and cynicism.

mountains, reflecting his deeply held belief that it was necessary to retain control of the mule. Indeed, it was he who insisted that a bit be bought for his new mule and that she be worked in this, even when loaded. Downloading, obstinacy, singularity and ontological disjunctions.

When his older mule was first fitted with a head collar, it had a decorative rather than a functional role. It was on her all the time²⁸² without being used. And there was resistance to working her without a bit. Approval for working her in a head collar had come from the agency owner but this message did not get through²⁸³; I found myself having to insist that she not be worked in a bit. At this point, the manager stated that his staff had been working mules like that for fourteen years and knew what they were doing. They did not therefore need training!

How are we to understand this? The primacy of control and objective efficiency is evident. Judgement, cynicism and fear win over curiosity, compassion and courage. Perhaps, but there is always more.

He later emphasised that he did not want to have to tell local people how to manage their mules even if they were working for him. He did not see it as his responsibility and was therefore resistant to the idea of establishing any new standard and working towards it:

Why can't I just get on with my work here ... with our mule here? And that's it! The end! When the muleteers go out on trek, I don't care about him and his mule. He is responsible for his mule not me. Because if I start saying to everyone that they must do this or that, they can leave us. And, tomorrow, if I need mules, where am I going to find them? Will you go and get them? ... Everybody can leave us ... They can find work elsewhere.²⁸⁴

²⁸² Worn under her bridle (see Figure 6).

²⁸³ I found it hard and very frustrating trying to find ways to show those involved that there were alternatives that would make both their own lives and those of their mules better.

²⁸⁴ Pourquoi je fais [*sic*] pas mon travail à la *** seul ... la mule à la ***? Et c'est tout! Et c'est fini! ... En sortie, je m'en fiche de lui. Il est responsable de sa mule. Parce-que si je viens de dire à tout le monde qui travail pour la ***, tu es obligé de faire ça, ils peuvent quitter la ***. Demain si j'ai besoin de mules, où je peux les trouver? C'est toi qui va les chercher? ... Tout le monde peut quitter. Partout il peut travailler.



Figure 8.6: The agency's old mule is carrying fire wood up from the village. She has been left with a bit in her mouth. She has picked up some food from the path and is trying to eat it as best she can, prevented from doing so efficiently by the inattention of the staff working her and the manager's insistence that she be worked in a bit.

There it is again. A reluctance to insist on change for fear of an unwelcome consequence: delays, staff complaints, accidents. Relinquishing control after all implies embracing uncertainty, leaning into vulnerability (Brown, 2015).

Whilst the manager was aware of the issue of the traditional bit, he did not appear to care enough about it to take a stand and actively seek solutions. This was most clearly demonstrated by his riding the mule of a regular employee who worked his mule in a traditional bit. I interpreted his turning a blind eye to this as him fearing the release of forces that he might not be able to control, whether they be human or non-human. Control was key; change represented a threat. Distrust and a reluctance to open to the other characterised the relationship between local people and their mules. This view is

reinforced by the tales people tell of being injured²⁸⁵ by a mule, of how nasty or strong mules are and of how they must be forced to work. Fear and distrust then become reciprocal and the cycle perpetuates itself.

In one case a policy was developed stipulating that "as far as is practically possible ... no mules working for [us] should be worked in traditional bits". Instead, SPANA bits were to be used. Little or no thought was given to how the policy was to be implemented²⁸⁶ ²⁸⁷: bits obtained, fitted and their use policed. Why were they resistant to the idea of using head collars, seeing this as "a step too far"? Several possible explanations suggest themselves. It may be a product of management at a distance²⁸⁸ and the lack of dialogue available to achieve change. It may be that there was a lack of decisive leadership and inadequate leverage over those responsible for local practices. It may be that the need to transform the relationship between man and mule, thereby addressing the underlying fear and distrust was simply not recognised and therefore discounted²⁸⁹ as a problem. It may be that multiple narratives and perspectives gave rise to competing priorities that were never negotiated. It may also be that the risks associated with pursuing change loomed large in the minds of those involved and their awareness of alternative narratives and possibilities (i.e. the problem's solvability) was limited.

These risks were often alluded to and included concerns over client safety:

The owners claimed to have concerns over the safety of working a mule in a bitless bridle when providing rides for their clients. This could be traced back to a court case in which a client had sued them following a riding accident and their fears that they might be sued in the event of any further accident.

The position held reflects a lack of awareness at several levels. There is firstly, a misunderstanding of local practice for it is more heterogeneous than suggested

²⁸⁵ The electrician who worked for this agency had fallen from a wall and broken his leg after a mule reacted when he passed behind her. His version of what happened placed the blame firmly on the mule and not on his inability to read and communicate with her.

²⁸⁶ Field Notes 36, page 24 (17th June, 2015).

²⁸⁷ The challenges of policy implementation help us understand better the judgements, fears, assumptions and beliefs that underpin existing practices and that must be brought into the open and addressed.

²⁸⁸ The owners visit approximately once a month and are only present on site for a few days. Emails are sent to a secretary in an office who then has to read them to the manager, who does not read French and speaks no English. Much gets lost this way and it is almost certain that all the reports sent to the agency did not get shared with the manager.

²⁸⁹ Discounting the reasons for the problem (Wagner, 1986, p. 70).

above²⁹⁰ and continually evolving. There also appears to be a certain amount of confusion between the different ways in which a mule is worked and, in particular, whether she is ridden and who actually rides her. The mule can be worked as a pack mule, can be led with a tourist on the mule's back or ridden. Only in the latter case is the mule under the control of the rider. The mule is most typically ridden by the owner, not by a tourist. Where tourists ride the mule, local practice is usually for the animal's handler to remain beside the mule. This confusion, in turn, gives rise to a failure to distinguish between the measures needed to manage the risks associated with leading a mule with a passenger (the client) on board and those associated with the client riding a mule. In the former case, the regular handler is working his mule from the ground. In the latter case, the rider is unfamiliar with the mule and is literally handed the reins. There are important differences between the safe handling of a mule when led in hand and that involved in riding. The fact that the mule handlers are not provided with any training or given any instruction as to what is expected of them further adds to the confusion. This, however, remains invisible (Figure 8.7).

There is little or no staff selection process²⁹¹ and no commitment to staff training and development. There is therefore no system in place for an employer to assess safety and competency, let alone welfare. This, however, is obscured by the lack of records on staff and mules, the absence of any training and assessment procedures for muleteers and the ease with which this remains hidden.

Where mule welfare is concerned, the bit is viewed by the agency owners as a (or perhaps even, 'the') guarantee of client safety. Its importance is, however, overstated and this others the failure to provide training for the mules and mule handlers and those managing them. This is reflected in the comments provided by Ben Hart, an equine behaviourist who was the agency's expert witness during their court case (Appendix 2):

²⁹⁰ There is no one practice or way of doing things and there is no standard equipment.

²⁹¹ The agency draws muleteers from the pool of muleteers available in the village.



Figure 8.7: Two clients ride up the mule path for lunch²⁹². The mule in front is being dragged from the side by one rein, pulling the bit across the mule's mouth. The mule behind is being ridden in a rope head collar, without any need for a bit. Neither client is wearing head protection and neither will have been offered any.

²⁹² 9th November, 2014.

Unsubstantiated claims that the mule spooked because a stone was thrown hide the fact that stone throwing is common practice in a community whose relations with the mule are poor, a community where mules are driven not lead, privileging fear over trust. The nature of the relationship(s) on which practice is founded is thus othered. The corporeal and emotional life of the mule slips through the net that seeks to capture reality. This after all was not about the mule's reality. It was about which partial truth, that of the defendant or the accuser would prevail in the courtroom: Partial truths temporarily singularised in a court finding.

The brute singularity for mules in this agency's operation is that their answer to the traditional bit problem was to claim they had a policy that banned it from their operation²⁹³. They advocated instead that mules be worked in a modern curb bit²⁹⁴, largely because it is made available locally by a visiting charity²⁹⁵ and allows them to claim the mule is safe to ride. Their solution is therefore about switching from one form of control to another. It discounts (Wagner, 1986, pp. 65-71) the reasons for the problem, ignoring the fact that the proposed solution is inappropriate for mules and fails to address the underlying fears that characterise the relations between man and mule. There was no willingness to abandon the idea that mules must be controlled using a metal instrument in their mouths. Their advocacy of mule welfare was thus limited by their focus on the bit and my failure to redirect their attention upstream, to the relationship between mule and man, to the beliefs and assumptions that underpin these relations and to their own staff training and development policies and practices²⁹⁶. Perhaps most importantly, our failure to establish dialogue and achieve deeper understanding of the issue in context should be recognised as a significant barrier to change.

²⁹³ There was, however, no written commitment, no clear policy and no commitment to provide training to allow the policy to be effectively delivered. This reflects a reluctance to interfere with the local community and the local way of doing things. There is some concern that they not be seen to be offering work to a select band of muleteers and this appears to obscure the need to set and enforce minimum standards.

²⁹⁴ Their own young mule was, at the end of 2015, being worked in a snaffle bit and other members of their regular muleteering team are also in snaffle bits. Head collars are encouraged but not required.

²⁹⁵ SPANA Maroc have been distributing a heavy curb bit to mules in Imlil, after successfully using it with the caliche horses in Marrakech.

²⁹⁶ These are the processes by which perceived objects are collectively co-created.

Other organisations were willing to address at least some of these forces, to recraft narratives, “to weave together different goods ... to imagine and practise worldmaking ... in which links between different partially connected goods are made and remade” (Law, 2004, p. 151). A different kind of ally willing to craft meetings, enter into dialogue and recraft the *between*. These companies were smaller, less enmeshed with the local community²⁹⁷ and had different operational structures and decision-making capabilities; their ability to shift norms, establish a singular standard and influence the status quo therefore differed significantly. Their respective journeys towards improved mule welfare were therefore quite different; this next section tells their story.

8.4 *Prototyping Standards with Agencies*

These early experiences of working with different agencies helped develop an understanding of the need to undertake co-seeing and co-sensing journeys with agencies and help them develop their awareness of mule welfare issues that could then inform the development and implementation of mule welfare policies as a way of enacting welfare standards.

What happens between awareness and action? Where the management structure of the organisation did not allow people to be brought together, to share perspectives, to dialogue and co-create change²⁹⁸, this could result in a failure to establish clear objectives across the whole team. This is consistent with Goodwin’s claim that “Respons-ability involves entering into dialogue” (2011, p. 33), for whilst objectives might be specified from above, understanding and enacting them emerges in practice. These practices are multiple for they are born of the *between*. Attending to the interplay between international and industry standards, company policies and muleteering practice allows us to consider what happens when moving between policy and practice.

This account explores how the owners of two agencies with operations in the Imlil area were able to deliver significant change within their operations thereby transforming the

²⁹⁷ Where an agency’s identity is closely tied up with the community, there is a reluctance to rock the boat.

²⁹⁸ This rendering visible, in turn, creates a friction that makes it difficult, if not impossible, for alternative welfare norms to coexist. as their coexistence is only possible when ways of relating to the mule remain in the private sphere.

way their teams worked. In each case, they were personally committed to the issue and undertook co-sensing journeys, coming out on the ground to see and experience it first-hand. They understood the need for change and actively created learning spaces in which their teams could explore the issues involved. In doing so, they cleared the way for the prototyping of solutions to the various mule welfare issues that confronted them. They framed the problem in ways that allowed them to take control²⁹⁹ of the issue and delegated the implementation to people who came to understand and care about the issues. This is the story of the journeys towards improved mule welfare taken by James and The Mountain People (TMP)³⁰⁰ and by Chris and Far Frontier Expeditions (FFE)³⁰¹.

8.4.1 Journeys with The Mountain People

James's awareness of mule welfare is born of proximity to the mule and to his head muleteer; for James, any gaps in awareness were thus easily bridged. Throughout 2015, James was living and working in the Imlil valley. He was present on the ground, his apartment and office lay directly opposite his head muleteer's mule, who he could see from his window (Figure 8.8a). She was there in front of his eyes. He could see everything that Mohamed and his father did with and to their mule. He could see her back, how she was loaded, how she was fed and watered, the extent to which the flies bothered her. He witnessed the humane tether being tried out and abandoned as she was left, free to feed from her bag of straw, or with a rein looped to the door handle.

And, as Mohamed learnt and developed new ways of looking after and working with his mule, James saw these too (Figure 8.8b-8.8c), coming to appreciate Mohamed's ability and the ease with which he learnt to communicate with his mule.

In Mohamed, Ellen appears to have found a fast learner who has a good affinity with and understanding for his mule. When I arrived to see them working, it was clear that he had understood how to open his hands and he was achieving good head turn and neck bend. James observed to me that Mohamed's mule "already gets it" and understands what is being asked of her. She was moving fluidly and comfortably around a set of wooden posts on the edge of the road that made for an excellent obstacle course. James also commented on how well she had adapted given that she

²⁹⁹ By making it a priority.

³⁰⁰ <http://www.the-mountain-people.com/>

³⁰¹ <http://farfrontiers.co.uk/>

has spent most of her life working otherwise. He was surprised that she had taken to it so quickly!³⁰²

James even went as far as to jump on Mohamed's mule, riding her bitless, thereby embodying the actions and feeling the mule respond to his communications. Mohamed, in this instance, was coaching his employer, sharing with him, his new knowledge. Wordless sharing. Dialogue. Thus, when it came to integrating these ideas into the work of The Mountain People, there was little resistance. Though unable to devote much time to developing the initiative, James was willing to try out simple things and promote the issue.

Ok ... Very simple thing that we can do... We can push our guys that work with us to really think about the mule side of things and to gently push that kind of thing.³⁰³

James recognised that change takes time:

It just takes time. And that's the thing behind a business At least from our perspective ... Knowing that it does take time and that you are asking a lot of people to embrace something that is new and foreign and that in the long run will be a huge benefit for them. So you just need that time. That's part of it ... No, we want to be there for the long term and see those things come to fruition.³⁰⁴

He recognised that his energies were entirely taken up developing his business and trying to get it "to a healthy place". As such, it was important to avoid damaging the relations they have worked hard to establish locally, whilst advancing standards. Moving things forward was greatly aided by Mohamed giving up time to take lessons. He demonstrated such a keen interest and desire to learn that James paid him to go on a two-day training trek, thereby creating a space for learning. Mohamed organised meetings for the muleteers from his village and took an active role in providing lessons for those wanting to learn to ride bitless (Figures 8.8d-8.8e). James attended and encouraged these, listening to the men's concerns and questions. Give and take, mutual reciprocity.

³⁰² Field Notes 34, page 1 (21st may, 2015).

³⁰³ Field Notes 32, page 9 (4th May, 2015).

³⁰⁴ Field Notes 32, page 10 (4th May, 2016).

James subsequently, in consultation with Mohamed, developed and implemented a company mule welfare strategy that included a tiered pay structure, rewarding those who only work their mules in head collars and have attended training. His company refuses to employ mules who are worked in traditional bits and has purchased locally-made bitless bridles for those muleteers who have attended training.

We have tier payment system to try to encourage people to move toward the bit-less bridles. We currently pay 150dhs per day for SPANA bits, 165 for the bit-less bridles and 175 for those that have done some training with you and are following through with using the head collars. We also, are aiming to give first rights to work with us to those that have done more training and use the bit-less head collars. I have also said to Mohammed that a few of the guys that work with us regularly and use the SPANA bits need to look to, in the near future, moving towards bit-less head collars and do further training when available.³⁰⁵

Their presence on the ground, their presence to each other, to the mules and muleteers are significant, providing opportunities to turn to the other, to attend and dialogue. This is knowing the mule born of proximity and an *I-Thou* commitment. Their commitment to, and mutual respect for, each other and for mules gave rise to generative dialogue between James and Mohamed that allowed the existing system to be transcended and transformed. This literally meant that they could go from rule reproducing to rule generating (Scharmer, 2009, p. 238). Together they could centrally coordinate (Law, 2004, p. 100) a singularity of sorts that was sensitive to multiplicity: as evidenced by the tiered pay structure and gentle but directive conducting of their small team.

Further, more comprehensive rule generating was evident in the approach taken by FFE and the industry body, EPA. Their operations are conducted at a distance from the mule and from mule welfare and on a larger scale; there is therefore even more multiplicity to bundle together and coordinate. It is to these scaled up enactments of welfare we turn next.

³⁰⁵ Email dated 17th March 2016



Figure 8.8a: Mohamed's mule stands patiently untethered by the garage opposite James's apartment. James is therefore able to see almost all aspects of her daily life and the care she receives.

the mountain people



Mohamed Tanssi

James Kniffen

Figures 8.8b-8.8c: James, and Mohamed and Mohamed's mule see each other on a daily basis and it is easy to establish generative dialogue between the three to explore what good communication might look like.





Figures 8.8d-8.8e: Mohamed's understanding of dialogue is excellent allowing him to provide lessons to Brahim's youngest son, Abdellatif in how to communicate with the family's mule when riding her in a bitless bridle (above) and help Youssef (below) understand what his mule feels over her nose when the reins are pulled and the mule is asked to drop her head and slow down or stop.



8.4.2 *Journeys with Far Frontier Expeditions and EPA*

The owner of FFE made an unsolicited approach (Appendix 1) to ask for help in introducing welfare standards for mules across his operation. From the outset, he wanted a code of practice that his company and others could sign up to:

When asking for a code of conduct that he can sign up to and that he can push other members of the Expedition Providers' Association to take up / sign up to. He said: "We need you to tell me what we should be doing"³⁰⁶.

He wanted the singularity provided by expert advice, by what he termed "a set of guidelines. for providers". Achieving singularity or even a semblance of singularity, however, represents an immense challenge for a large operation that spans at least two continents and the cultures and practices of British and Moroccan personnel.

Over the months that followed, Chris developed his awareness of the various issues involved and what was needed to tackle them. Initially, a gap in awareness existed, one that contrasted with the clear desire and commitment to do something for the mules: His company released a brochure in 2014 that talked of donkeys rather than mules³⁰⁷ and illustrated the feature using an image of a mule owner riding a loaded mule (Figure 8.9).

Where loading was concerned, he agreed that the groups could easily weigh the luggage and the saddle blanket. He had not realised that the picture he had chosen to use in his brochure showed a muleteer on their mule and that this was in itself a problem! I pointed out that he would have to decide on his own company's position on this – are muleteers to be allowed to ride their mules?³⁰⁸

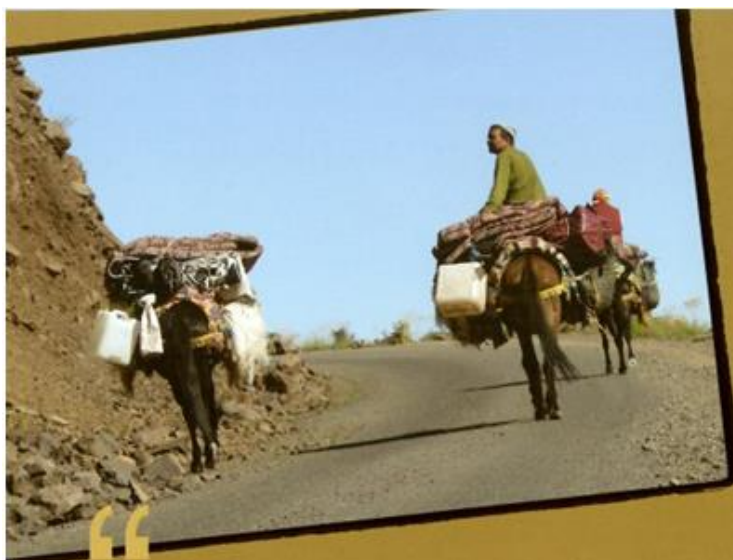
This gap was soon addressed as Chris took it upon himself to study the subject and visit The Donkey Sanctuary. He developed a Checklist for his leaders that was released in July 2014 and adopted by EPA, after taking on board feedback³⁰⁹. It was then trialled, in the field, by one of his team leaders, in October 2014, who would later contribute to the drafting of the EPA standard.

³⁰⁶ Field Notes 14, page 4 (24th June, 2014).

³⁰⁷ A common mistake!

³⁰⁸ Field Notes 14, page 33 (12th July, 2014).

³⁰⁹ From myself and Stephen Blakeway, International Director of The Donkey Sanctuary UK (2009-2016).



Chris, I like your choice of animal projects – all iconic, all important in themselves, and all symbolic – turtles for the sea; elephants for land wildlife eco-systems; and donkeys for the working animals of the world.

...we are now looking at donkey welfare in a very holistic way – with veterinary inputs important but only alongside a lot of preventive engagement with communities, with harness people, farriers, environmentalists, and donkey and mule users of all sorts.

Tourism and outdoor pursuits could be a powerful force for change so it is great to hear about the work you are doing, and about Pukka Projects.

Stephen Blakeway
Director of International Operations
The Donkey Sanctuary

28

Working Donkeys

The lack of respect for donkeys in certain countries is disturbing and sad. Used like bits of machinery with no concern for feelings, well-being or welfare, donkeys are not kept or handled properly.

Morocco, and especially the city of Marrakesh, is one of the worst places we have come across. Donkeys are worked non-stop and left strapped into their carts with chaffing straps, without shade, water or food. Vans and scooters rush around in a chaotic manner and often knock into the legs of the donkeys. This can cripple or lame them and still they are expected to work with no respite.

In rural areas they seem to have a better life but interestingly, when donkeys are associated with tourist load carrying, their abuse becomes apparent. Because local guides don't want to pay for extra donkeys and the tourists aren't asked to pay more, or recognise the issue and complain, it is the donkeys that suffer. Ever-increasing weights of bags and tourists oblivious to the plight of the animals mean expedition donkeys are overladen – something that can and should be controlled.

There needs to be a charter for the care and carriage allowance of donkeys to work with tourists, accepted by Moroccan authorities and backed and enforced by all tour operators with their partners in Morocco. Far Frontiers are working hard to implement this initiative. In addition, there are projects that vets working for animal welfare charities in Morocco are supporting. Far Frontiers embrace these projects and strives to see them through in partnership with these vets.

We also try to encourage schools to take an interest in their pack animals and take on community projects that help them wherever and whenever possible.

Figure 8.9: The 2014 Far Frontiers brochure was sent out to over 2000 schools. It depicts a mule handler riding a loaded mule, something that would come to be recognised as unacceptable over the months ahead. Note too the use of 'donkey' to describe 'mules'.



Figures 8.10a-8.10b: Betty is an aged, cachectic mule who is barely able to eat, let alone work. She was, however, being used by her owner to transport goods (including tourist luggage) locally between villages. Below she can be seen struggling with a load of chopped straw³¹⁰.



³¹⁰ Note the wide based stance and how difficult it is to see her emaciated rump under the pack saddle.



Figures 8.10c-8.10d: Chris paid 50€ to buy and retire this mule. This was done in part as an educational initiative for a Far Frontiers school group and for the benefit of local muleteers, developing their awareness of the many welfare issues affecting old mules and the unacceptability of forcing them to work by using a traditional bit.





Figures 8.10e-8.10f: Betty is transported and retired to the Jarjeer Mule and Donkey Sanctuary, where she is cared for over the few months she had left to live.



Coming into this, Chris's starting point was one of disgust (Figure 8.9) at the way donkeys and other equines were treated in Marrakech and a desire to do something. Initially, he thought to hire some land to allow old donkeys to be retired. During the October 2014 visit of one of his teams, he arranged for an old mule from Imlil to be retired (Figures 8.10a-8.10f). He had her named 'Betty', after his mother and was much saddened by her death a few months later.

This experience taught him that this kind of intervention was unsustainable and did not address the root causes of problems. Perhaps most significantly, he came to see himself as part of the system³¹¹ that had co-created the problem and therefore needed to take responsibility for the welfare of the animals they were exploiting. The following extract from an email, illustrates this. It represents a clear example of the emergence of an awareness that originates from beyond one's organisational boundaries and potentially can act across those boundaries (Scharmer, 2009).

What hit me was the knowledge that not long, just over 30 years ago there were a few mules in the mountains with the Berbers. Now there can be 70 per village ... This influx has all come from mountain tourism. It is not adapting the use of mules already in the community but bringing them in. This is profound as no one can say this is traditional or this is how it is. It isn't. Mountain tourism is responsible and mountain tourism can and must take responsibility. Poor practice is just as much due to the attitude of leaders and punters to date. It isn't just the mule men and the Berbers.

Education is a massive element. The influx of mules was purely for demand. We need a four-legged vehicle for the mountains to carry kit. Looking after them, getting the best out of them was not considered. Harsh bits and harsh methods of communication were used and so are still used. What is needed is for the mule man to feel wanted, valued and respected for the way he manages and cares for his animals. It should be a privilege to work with these guys and have kit carried by these fine animals. That is an attitude that the LEADER can instil.³¹²

...

³¹¹ He thus saw how the problem was collectively co-created.

³¹² Field Notes 25, page 1 (7th December, 2014).

The leader can look at the check list and work with the local guides and mule men to ensure the husbandry guidelines are followed so that everyone is professional and right.

I don't blame the mule men, far from it. The leaders and companies can influence and ensure good practice.³¹³

An ex-military man, Chris grasps the problem and develops a strategy for tackling it that is logical and precise. He places an emphasis on his leaders to check the welfare of the mules and instil a different attitude. They are charged with looking and with seeing, with promoting visibility and accountability. The practicalities of helping the muleteer turn to his mule and establish an understanding born of trust and dialogue are, however, othered for there is no short cut to this. Othered too are the gaps in understanding and awareness that must be bridged; gaps that occupy the *between*, the less-than-visible relational space between different actors and stakeholders (human and non-human) and their enactments of welfare.

This growing upstream awareness allowed Chris to realise that, in many respects, he had co-created and was responsible for the problem. He saw with fresh eyes and redirected his attention to what he could best do to address the problem. Over the twelve months (June 2014 - May 2015), Chris undertook a co-seeing and co-sensing journey³¹⁴ that helped him better understand the welfare of the mules working on his trips, identify priorities and formulate and then clarify a mule welfare plan both for his own company and for EPA, of which his company is a member. This represented a significant commitment in terms of time, energy and resources. It was this commitment, this willingness to prototype tools and ideas and refine the strategy delivering the mule welfare plan that allowed a detailed awareness of the issues involved and what was needed to tackle them to emerge and start transforming local practice³¹⁵. Figure 8.11 provides a timeline and summary of the ways in which people from across the industry were brought together by Chris to undertake U-journeys and

³¹³ Field Notes 25, page 1 (7th December, 2014).

³¹⁴ Unlike James's deep dive, this was not undertaken within the community but at a distance, via informants and company representatives.

³¹⁵ In doing so, he and his team co-created places and infrastructures for hands on prototyping of new forms of operating to explore the future by doing.

develop their awareness of mule welfare issues and of the need to change local practice.

Holding spaces: Meetings, workshops, audits and training treks.

Gathering the global industry together is nigh on impossible; connecting them in other ways is therefore essential. Chris was instrumental in creating holding spaces that brought key stakeholders together to learn about and discuss mule welfare. In the UK, he brought together representatives of the EPA companies operating with mules around the World (Figure 8.12) to learn about the very real issues that were affecting the very mules they used. In undertaking co-sensing journeys, they started to realise that this was their problem not somebody else's.

This initial meeting led to a commitment to collaboratively get ground handlers in Morocco meeting to discuss the issue. This promoted dialogue and was itself ground-breaking, requiring companies let go of their fears and reservations; it meant transcending ideas of competition and mutual suspicion to work towards something bigger. There was also a commitment to provide access to allow me to undertake welfare audits of the muleteering teams and provide training for them. These three outputs were instrumental in bridging the gaps in awareness that existed across the services supply chain. Other outputs followed, including the creation of a Mule Welfare Charter and the inclusion of mule welfare minimum standards in the contracts that EPA members have with their Moroccan ground handlers.

According to Goodwin (2011, p. 31), “when something is everyone’s responsibility, it can end up being nobody’s responsibility”. Bringing the industry together to better understand how responsibility is shared is therefore of fundamental importance. Knowing here can be understood as that born of genuine community (Kramer, 2003, pp. 73-95), of *Gemeinschaft*. Such meetings are essential if the power of relationship is to be fostered as a counterbalance to the will to profit and the will to be powerful; failure to do so allows the using and abusing of the mule and muleteer to be normalised. As Buber (2000, p. 45) says: “The development of the function of experiencing and using is

June 2014	Initial contact made by Chris.
July 2014	Chris visits the Donkey Sanctuary in Sidmouth to learn more about mule welfare; further meetings held at his home.
July 2014	Development and publication of <i>Leader Checklist</i>
September 2014	Mule care on the agenda for EPA Meeting, hosted by FFE.
October 2014	Mule Care Initiative Workshop for FFE school group in Morocco.
October 2014	Retirement of aged mule, named Betty.
November 2014	EPA Working Mule Care Initiative Workshop (UK)
March 2015	Ground handlers Working Mule Care Initiative Workshop (Morocco).
April 2015	First <i>Mule Welfare Audit</i> undertaken for FFE.
May 2015	<i>Charter for Care of Working Mules</i> issued.
June-October 2015	Further <i>Mule Welfare Audits</i> undertaken for EPA members.
June-October 2015	Training expeditions for muleteering teams undertaken.
March – May 2016	Training workshops for World Challenge.
September 2016	Drafting of EPA Technical Guidance Document on <i>Pack Mule Welfare on Expedition</i> .

Figure 8.11: Timeline of initiatives that allowed awareness of mule welfare in the expeditions industry to be developed across EPA companies. The initiation of these meetings provided a space for individuals to feel and know the impact of their consumption of muleteering services on the mule and muleteer. Turning away from the “will to profit and to be powerful (Buber, 2000, pp. 48-49) and attending to the mule and muleteer as *I-Thou* thus has the potential to be transformative.

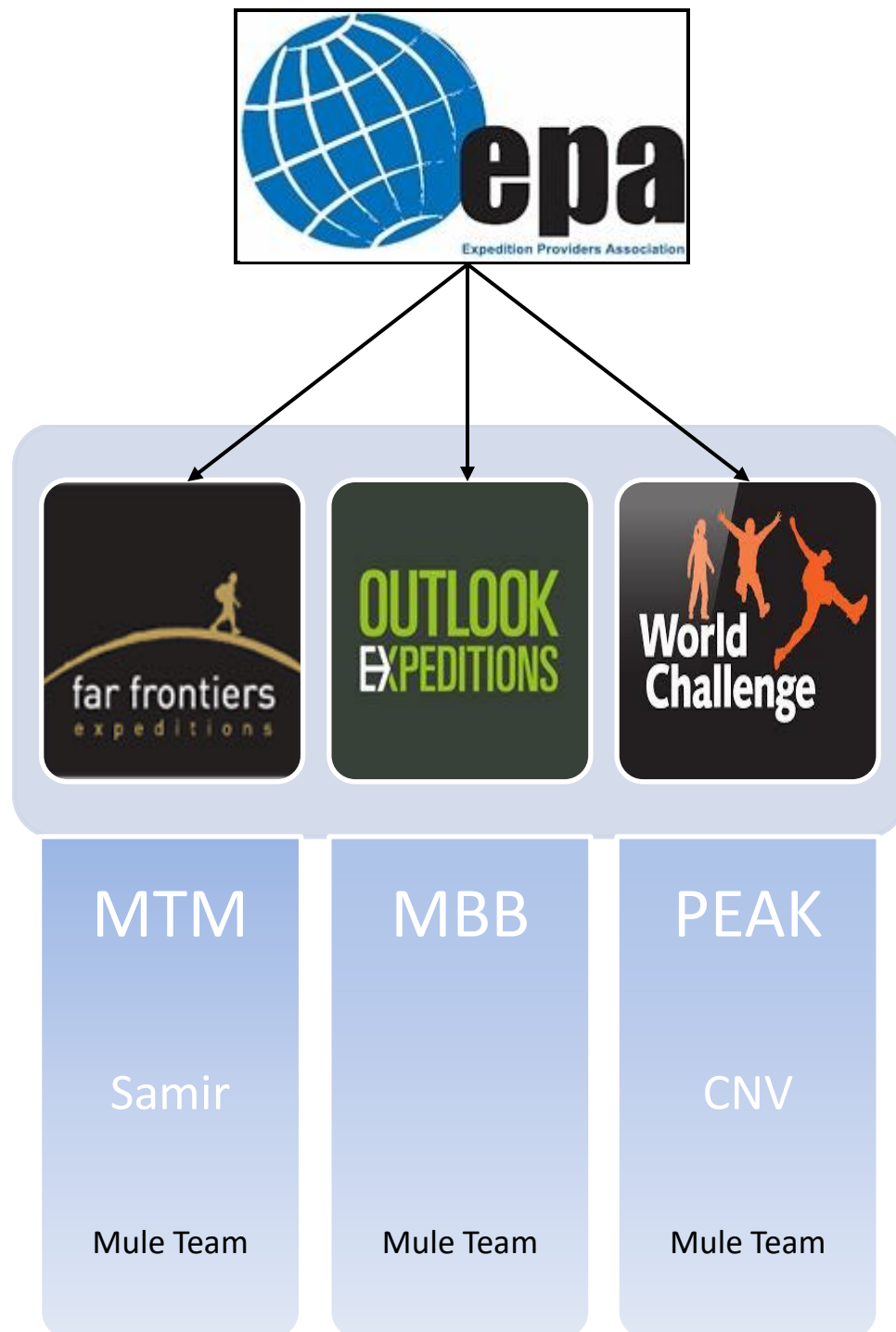


Figure 8.12: Three member companies of EPA³¹⁶ with operations in Morocco attended a workshop on Pack Mule Welfare in Mountain Tourism.³¹⁷ The meeting was also attended by a fourth company with operations in East Africa that also utilises pack animals and Shane Winsor of the Royal Geographic Society. The companies each work with a ground handler³¹⁸ (agency) in Morocco who is responsible for organising the muleteering teams.

³¹⁶ EPA is an industry body that encourages companies to work to industry standards (including BS8848).

³¹⁷ Field Notes 24, pages 10-12 (19th November, 2014).

³¹⁸ In the case of World Challenge, two ground handlers (also known as Destination Management Companies) are involved.

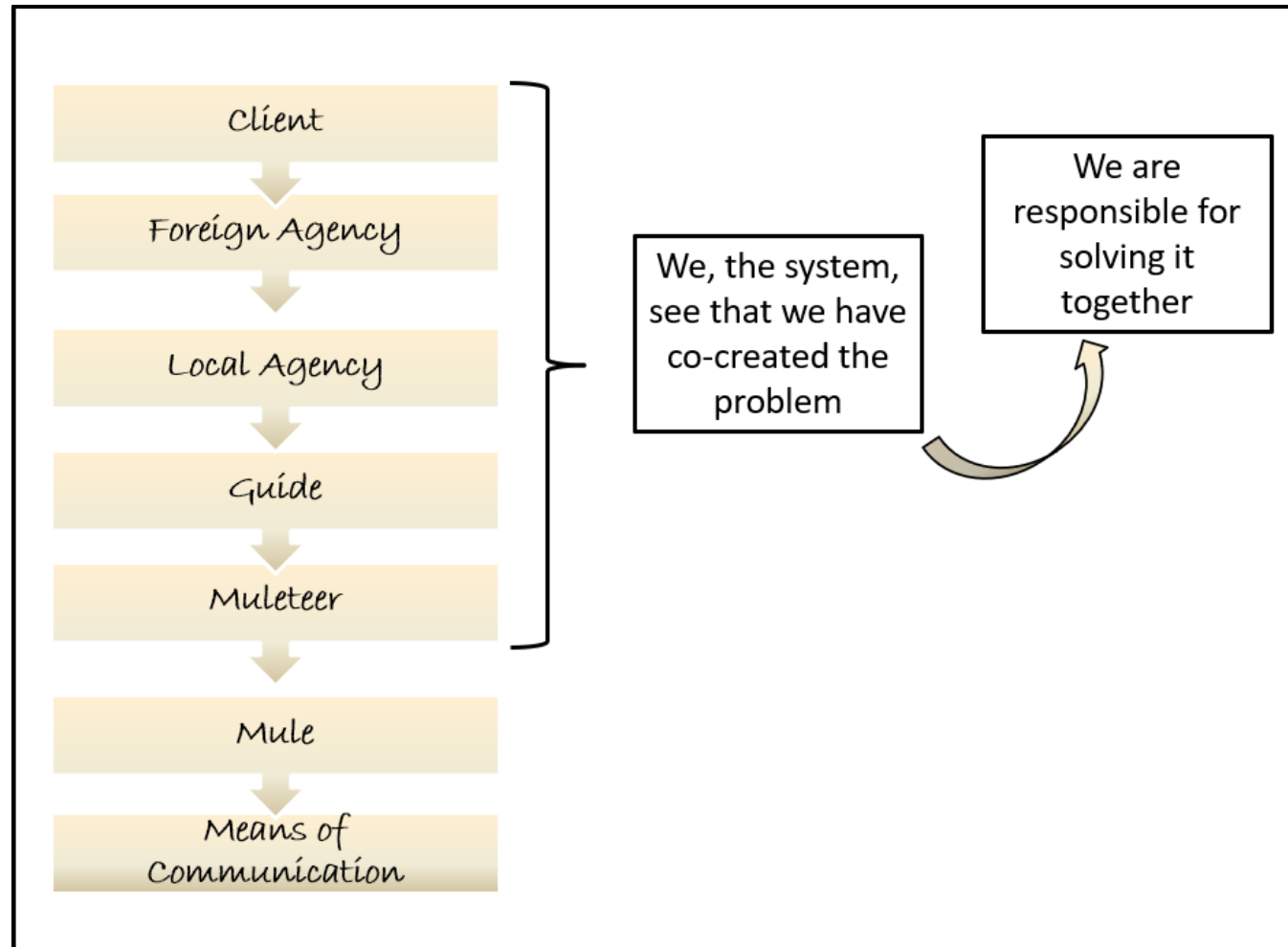


Figure 8.13: The services supply chain that the mule and muleteer find themselves caught up in is a global, intercontinental one. Each member of the supply chain needs to understand their role and accompanying responsibilities. Without this awareness, they rarely see that they are responsible for the way the muleteer treats and communicates with his mule is. They also rarely if ever meet and are unable to negotiate their respective responsibilities unless they are brought together. This is what Chris Short was able to initiate.

obtained mostly through a reduction of the power of relation[ship]”. This mutual turning to the other, to the mule, the muleteer and their employers allows *I-Thou* relationships to be built up in community. Genuine dialogue thus allows the essential we to be renewed.

The operations of these larger companies are complex and hard to apprehend. It is for this reason that mismetings occur, leaving stakeholders with insufficient understanding of the welfare standards expected and how to deliver them. If agencies primarily enact mule welfare at a distance through their muleteers, their operational procedures and their contracts for services, the way these are bundled together is important for it determines whether they cohere or fall apart. If welfare and multiplicity arise in practice because of the bundling together of the multiple threads of any relational narrative, what happens when they encounter the singularity of standards, codes of practice, service contracts and company policies? How, to use the terminology of Law and Moll, are differences regulated? How do different realities overlap and interfere? Can codes of practice “bridge the boundaries of the sites over which [welfare]³¹⁹ is distributed” (Moll, 2002, p. 117)?

To explore this further and understand how far welfare can travel, when responsibility is shared across teams, supply chains and indeed continents we need to revisit the moments when they meet and are dialogically reconstructed. We therefore turn to meetings.

- *Ground handler meeting*

The ground handler meeting allowed attendees to explore the issues impacting on the mule and how they might be addressed. The bosses of the Moroccan companies were in the same room as muleteers and guides, each sharing their concerns and perspectives.

Muleteers evoked the poor pay, seasonal employment low status of the work as issues of concern that resulted in posts being filled with young muleteers who did not

³¹⁹ Here, the term ‘disease’ as used by Moll has been replaced by ‘welfare’.

care about the mule and viewed the work as temporary. One of the company owners summarised this; for him:

... there were two parts to the problem – a financial part and a personal part. Where loads were concerned, services were provided according to the size of the group but this could be difficult in a competitive market. Then there was the new generation of muleteers who did not care about their mules as their fathers had done. They were more likely to get on the mule because it was not their mule and not their investment. These boys often just viewed the mule as a tool of work.

One of the guides confirmed this, saying:

There is competition between companies in Morocco ... they have to remain competitive. This means they will often refuse to help or listen to muleteers. Muleteers' work is undervalued and little appreciated. It is only when they are not there that you realise how important their role is. Everything is getting expensive - 125 dirhams a day is nothing! ... Companies are just concerned about their benefits.³²⁰

When discussing the eradication of traditional bits and their replacement with head collars (or bitless bridles), someone stated that these need to be made available by the companies themselves. There was no discussion of how they could be sourced, paid for and used³²¹. Moving away from the traditional bit is thus viewed as a matter of swapping one piece of equipment for another. The need to go beyond that and look at changing the nature of the relationship between man and mule, but also between muleteers and the agencies they work for was also evoked but not as part of the solution to the traditional bit. Ontological disjunctions thus arise when causes are not traced upstream, to source.

Five action points emerged:

- i. Create a muleteer's association.
- ii. Head collars to be promoted / used.
- iii. Eliminate use of the traditional bit.

³²⁰ Field Notes 29, pages 27-28 (1st-2nd March, 2015).

³²¹ Chris's presence at the meeting meant that he gained a head start here over those companies who had no UK representatives at the meeting and who took a further eighteen months to work out how they would address the issue of sourcing / supplying head collars.

- iv. Improve tethering practices.
- v. Training for chief muleteers.
- vi. No riding on a loaded mule.³²²

It was recognised that a robust local muleteer's association was needed locally to represent the interests of the muleteers and take forward the work. It was unclear, however, how such an organisation would be able to protect mule welfare other than by defending a minimum daily rate³²³, especially when the very nature of the muleteer and their view of the mule needed addressing. Perhaps they could help muleteers speak with one authoritative voice? This solidarity may help rebalance the relationship between muleteers and their employers but does little to address that between mules and muleteers. The mule after all, was not in the room. Without the necessary encounters, the need to know and relate to her better was hard to surface. She can, however, appear through audits and training for these provide opportunities for dialogical encounters: exchanges between different ways of looking, seeing, acting and relating. This next section explores how audits attempt to regulate difference by providing unambiguous information about mule welfare and muleteering practice.

- *Mule welfare audits*

A series of audits were conducted between April and October 2015³²⁴, for four different companies looking to implement the EPA charter. Detailed, illustrated, reports were provided on each mule and muleteer working regularly for the company's ground handler, rendering mules and welfare visible to staff in the UK offices of these companies.

These audits highlighted gaps in awareness³²⁵, whilst also seeking to bridge them. Some of the gaps were surprising: The first audit conducted for FFE was undertaken after they had issued their team of regular muleteers with new headcollars. These had been issued to ensure that all mules working for FFE were worked in

³²² Field Notes 29, page 30 (2nd March, 2015).

³²³ The desire to clamp down on people who bypass the rota system by waiting for work on the paths above the village and offer their services at slashed prices.

³²⁴ A team of ten muleteers, of which Mustapha was a member (pp. 268-289) were audited as part of a training for World Challenge, in February 2017.

³²⁵ Helping office staff see with fresh eyes the reality on the ground.

headcollars. Singularity. The audit, however, revealed multiplicity: There was little awareness of how head collars should be fitted and used. Several muleteers had these on too tight, resulting in hair loss, rubbing and injury (Figures 8.14a-8.14c). Absent too was an embodied awareness of how to use the equipment to communicate with and manage the mule. The audit thus highlighted that what might have been obvious in a UK office was far from obvious on the ground. The mule known at a distance and the welfare friendly practices stipulated in the standard did not translate from the page into practice. The muleteering team had not yet learnt to meet and know the mule and had limited understanding of the welfare they were being asked to enact. Training was therefore needed to overcome the barriers to meeting and knowing the mule and to change.

- *Muleteer training*

Taking small groups of muleteers and their mules away specifically to learn to work their mules in head collars provided spaces for them to embody a different way of working and relating to their mule. This, perhaps more than anything else, allowed awareness of the gaps between theory and practice, between policy and policy implementation, to be explored.

The detailed training reports rendered visible a host of realities that had, until then, remained hidden. Othered. Normalised. These realities were no longer private matters and could not be dismissed as such. Each muleteer's equipment, the condition of his mule and the way he worked and related to her was no longer his private affair. It was visible, made public, compared to that of his colleagues and with the norms set out by EPA. These realities then become the responsibility of those actors in the supply chain who employ the muleteer and his mule. Multiplicity thus emerges in practice and survives in private; but these fractal realities must be negotiated when made public.



Figures 8.14a-8.14b: The head collar has been applied too tightly, causing hair loss over the bridge of the nose and a sore over the end of the facial crest (arrow).





Figure 8.14c: The cause of the sore over the facial crest isn't hard to identify for someone who knows that hair loss is a sign of rubbing, who knows to re-spect and what to look for. The muleteers, however, lacked this awareness and had not spotted and appreciated that they had put the head collars on too tight.

- *Charter for Care of Working Mules*

As Chris and his team's awareness of mule welfare issues developed through being exposed to the issues themselves and the potential solutions available, they were able to develop a Charter of Care (Figures 8.15a-8.15c) for EPA.

This was written in England, in English and structured around the Five Freedoms. Although knowledge of mules and muleteer fed into this writing³²⁶, the text was not written in conjunction with team members on the ground in Morocco. Their input came later when their ability to understand and implement the recommendations was evaluated during training. This was not (yet) a co-creative project and the lack of opportunity for the muleteer's understanding of local context to shape the writing of the charter is worth commenting on. It highlights the power of the writer to

³²⁶ See the earlier reference to Callon's work on writing company manuals (p. 64).

impose a unitary version of reality over the multiple ways in which mule welfare is socially constructed. The inconsistencies and contradictions become apparent after the writing when the definitive statement passes from one office to the next and finally arrives in the hands of the muleteer who, invariably, can neither read nor understand the text.


Who translates, interprets and mediates between these multiple welfares? What gets lost in translation? A lot is lost. Othered. There are significant challenges associated with introducing any minimum standard where responsibility for the animal and the animal's care and wellbeing is thought to lie with the owner rather than with the employer: It is not sufficient for the agency to simply tell the muleteer what to do and provide the necessary equipment. Dialogue is required between agencies and muleteers to ensure the why and the how are also shared.


When discussing the requirement that mules be worked in head collars, provided by the company (thereby eliminating the difficulty associated with owners not having the right equipment), several practical objections were raised (pp. 288-292).

Interpreting and implementing the charter thus provided opportunities to hear, understand and unpack the muleteer's resistance to change and barriers to awareness. This underlined the local muleteer's view of the bit as an essential tool for controlling the mule. The bit allows the muleteer to objectify the mule, it serves like a gag, to shut down any communication. Removing the bit is therefore a means of re-engaging with the mule, opening up a conversation and attending better to their needs and wellbeing. The muleteer, however, must let go of the ideas that informed and structured the way he thought about his mule and how to work her. This represents a transformation of the bond between mule and muleteer, one that agencies and the wider industry can deliver, providing they recognise that they have a role in holding open the space for generative dialogue and the co-creation of new relationships. This takes time and practice: multiplicity. Standards, however, must be delivered now: singularity.

EPA Charter for Care of Working Mules

A system for maintaining healthy and happy working mules



 Supported by all EPA members
& affiliated ground handlers

FREEDOM FROM DISCOMFORT

Bits

- ✓ Only good quality stainless steel bits (such as those supplied by SPANA) can be used.
- ✓ All bits used should be in good working order and free from sharp edges.
- ✓ Bits should be kept clean.
- X Bit should not be causing any injury to tongue, bars, mouth or lips.
- X No traditional bits to be used.
- X No bits to be used when leading.

Head collars or bitless bridle

- ✓ When leading a mule a head collar without a bit should be used.
- ✓ Head collar or bitless bridle should be fitted well as per training.
- ✓ Head collar and bit should be cleaned and allowed to dry after every use.

Shoes

- ✓ Shoes should be fitted by experienced person.
- ✓ Mule should be checked regularly to ensure shoes are not worn or loose.
- ✓ Owners should be able to recognise foot imbalance and insist that this be corrected.

Tethers and hobbles

- ✓ Tethering should be kept to a minimum, only a couple of hours per day if necessary.
- ✓ Only humane tethers, such as those made by the Women's Cooperative, should be used.
- ✓ Mule should be tethered in such a way that they can lie, walk, stand up, reach food, water and shade without tensioning tether.
- ✓ Tethered mules should be monitored regularly.
- X Tether should not be put onto foot where wounds are present.
- X Plastic, chain, wire or twine tethers are unacceptable and should never be used.

Saddle blanket (Burdâa)

- ✓ Blanket should be brushed down, cleared of twigs and dirt and visually inspected before putting on.
- ✓ Blanket should sit clear of the backbone so that weight is born to either side of the midline.
- ✓ Blanket should be kept in good condition.
- ✓ Blanket should be examined to ensure comfortable fit after any repairs or maintenance.
- ✓ Blanket should be changed every two years as a minimum, sooner if there are signs of wear.
- ✓ Blanket should be taken off, brushed down and aired at night.
- X Blanket should not be stored on the ground.

Burden

- ✓ Sufficient mules must be provided for the required load for the duration of the trek.
- ✓ Bags should be evenly balanced for weight on mule.
- ✓ Set mule to client ratios to be adhered to at all times (see Appendix I).
- X No riding of loaded mules.
- X Extra weight must not be carried by any mule irrespective of its perceived strength.
- X Client bags should not exceed 15kg.

EPA Charter for Care of Working Mules

Figures 8.15a-8.15b: The EPA charter was introduced in May 2015. It was organised around the five freedoms and sought singularity by providing specific guidelines on the use of bits and head collars.

Rests

- ✓ Mule must have a rest day every 7-10 working days.
- ✓ Saddle blanket and load must be removed during rest periods.
- X Ill or injured mules must not be worked.
- X Mules should not be worked during the hottest hours of the day. If unavoidable, frequent rest breaks in the shade must be provided.

Road Transport

- ✓ Whilst being transported mule must be able to stand or sit properly, must have adequate food, water and ventilation.
- ✓ Loading must be carefully and calmly managed.
- ✓ Driving must take into account presence of mule.
- ✓ Adequate padding and bedding should be provided plus a grip floor.



FREEDOM FROM FEAR AND DISTRESS

Handling

- ✓ Handling should be calm and sympathetic. Owners should develop a thorough understanding of their mule and their mule's needs.
- ✓ Muleteers should attend handling training when possible.
- ✓ Mule should be walked slowly and patiently over difficult terrain.
- X No high speed riding, whipping, shouting, rein jerking, harsh stops or turns.

EPA Charter for Care of Working Mules

Figure 8.15c: The EPA charter provides guidance on mule handling that needs to be interpreted, understood and enacted within each relationship.

FFE bought and issued twelve head collars to the muleteers they worked with most regularly. A strategy was needed, however to ensure that occasional staff would be similarly equipped.

We have suggested and it's been accepted, that we will send 10 spare head collars to MTM for use on treks by MTM, especially with our groups, to use on mules that may not have received training but are going to work for us. This is to ensure that all mules working for us always have a minimum of a head collar. These 10 head collars will be kept by MTM and only fitted by Samir as and when required, if circumstances dictate.³²⁷

This meant both FFE and their ground handler could be sure that all mules working on their treks were suitably equipped. The muleteers would, in returning the equipment be unable to carry on practising and embodying these new ways of relating to and communicating with their mules and would revert back to their old equipment and practices. Change in this sense was limited to the company's operations and was not sustained beyond them. Welfare was thus truncated and boundaried for it to be deliverable. This was thus an area of fractal reality that FFE could not singularise through policy and practice. This represents an important limitation for welfare is enacted here as 'welfare on our treks' and the very necessary work of building trust and understanding into the mule-muleteer relationship is frustrated.

Elsewhere, the failure of muleteers, local ground handlers and foreign agencies³²⁸ to source head collars meant that these teams continued working much as they always had. Awareness of the issue was desperately slow translating into action. This "refusal of the call" (Campbell, 2008), this failure to further develop the solution to the problem meant that mules in the World Challenge teams were seen being worked in traditional bits in July 2016. Concurrently, the Outlook teams had some mules in

³²⁷ Field Notes 37, page 2 (13th July, 2015).

³²⁸ In 2016, neither World Challenge nor Outlook Expeditions had organised themselves to do this: World Challenge had failed to secure any agreement as to whether this would be paid for by their ground handlers. Finally, in early 2017, an order was placed for 38 head collars and these were delivered to their ground handler at the start of a training workshop. Outlook meanwhile, had approved funds for the purchase as early as October 2015 but only actioned this in the autumn of 2016

head collars³²⁹ but none working solely this way despite the teams having received training in their use and it becoming a contractual requirement.

- *Contracts with Moroccan ground handlers*

The introduction of contracts between UK companies and their ground handlers specifying that the mule welfare charter had to be implemented set expectations and provided a certain amount of leverage over the ground handlers. This had been a key part of Chris Short's approach dating back as far as the 2014 EPA conference, when he had argued that contracts would be a key plank of his approach.

Contracts of supply and employment, together with legislation and other forms of regulation are a well-recognised means of promoting accountability. When allied to a second form of responsibility, namely "the willingness of individuals and organisations to respond" they allow tourism to become more responsible, providing it has the capacity to do so (Goodwin, 2012, p. 33). This, however, remains problematic where awareness of mule welfare and of how to evaluate and improve it, is inadequately developed. This therefore represents a capability deficit for there is both a lack of opportunity and capacity to act, one that has implications for an organisation's ability to respond.

Getting other companies to follow FFE's lead took time but happened. Thus, Outlook had a contract in place³³⁰ with their ground handler for the summer of 2016 that clearly outlined what they expected:

Outlook Expeditions take pack mule welfare very seriously and support the EPA Mule Welfare initiative. Outlook Expeditions expect Mohamed Ben Brahim's full co-operation and support to ensure all aspects of the EPA mule welfare charter are implemented.

In particular, Outlook Expeditions would like to place particular emphasis on the following:

1. When working as pack mules, all mules must be worked in a head collar with nothing in their mouths.

³²⁹ Donations (i.e. donated head collars) supplied by the researcher during 2015.

³³⁰ Signed by both parties in April, 2016.

2. No mules in the team should be ridden in traditional bits.
3. No mules should be ridden when loaded.
4. A weight limit of 80kg per mule must be respected.
5. Humane tethers must be used at all times, if mules are tethered.
6. Mules and their owners must be presenting for work with well-maintained equipment. This means no wire repairs.

- *Mule Welfare Policies and Implementation Strategies*

In the autumn of 2016, a technical guidance note was produced by EPA, providing guidance on how companies can develop and implement a mule welfare policy (Appendix 5). This emphasises the need for contracts between UK and Moroccan agencies and the need to provide both equipment and training for muleteers. Its significance stems from the fact that it captures many of the key lessons learnt to date and provides a platform for companies seeking to take responsibility for mule welfare.

It has since been used as the basis for World Challenge's development and implementation of their own mule welfare policy. As part of this, they appointed a mule welfare champion to take responsibility for this work. This culminated in a week-long policy implementation workshop for the company's Moroccan ground handlers, in February 2017, attended by the welfare champion (Figure 7.8b). This was significant for the company's intentions were made clear as was their willingness to gather together stakeholders to engage in generative dialogue and establish and agree a strategy for delivering welfare improvements. Without meetings, these standards and guidance notes are not drawn into dialogue.

8.5 Conclusion

These journeys with agencies have shown how awareness of mule welfare as a co-created problem can be developed by tackling the cycle of absencing: not knowing (ignorance), not feeling (cynicism and lack of compassion) and not doing (fear of change) that preserves a one truth, them and us, destructive ecosystem. By prototyping ways of seeing, minds are opened to what is really there. This is the just the start, however, a threshold that must be crossed. It represents an invitation to keep looking, to sustain curiosity, to resist falling back into old ways of seeing, thinking and doing, to care enough about the issue to prototype new ways of being and doing.

Looking, seeing and knowing the mule is difficult for agencies: There are many barriers and gaps to awareness. There is much that gets between them and the mule including distance, hierarchies, power imbalances, vested interests, culture, economics and language.

Audits can address many of the gaps and barriers to seeing by ensuring that looking is undertaken systematically. Audits can thus cut through downloading providing a focussed way of seeing that yields information and awareness but not deeper understanding and answers. These come later if judgement is suspended and the invitation to keep looking, to be curious sustained. This then is about enrolling all stakeholders in that co-seeing / co-sensing journey, fostering proximity, genuine meeting and dialogue.

The experiences of TMP, FFE and EPA have shown that generative encounters are possible. In the case of TMP, a systematic rethinking of the relationships between mule-muleteer-head muleteer and agency were achieved because these were all brought into play at the same time and in the same place. James's presence and openness to respecting relationships within his team made for regular meetings and dialogue, that were genuine and generative. In more complex operations, where the supply chain promotes a distribution of tasks and discourages a view of the whole, this was more challenging. In the case of FFE and EPA, their leaders were asked to undertake checks and report back on findings; this does not amount to the system seeing itself, for the information can get lost in reports rather than making its way mule-side. Bridging such gaps, is the challenge.

The challenges of bringing all stakeholders together for generative dialogue should not be underestimated. Mismeetings are all-too-common when obedient listening is not prioritised. Keeping the mind open is critical for audits, standards and policies lend themselves to judgement (and a return to absencing) rather than the curiosity and creativity that take us further down the U. Sustaining that curiosity and creativity in the face of the habits of thought that objectify the other and dehumanise relationships is perhaps the biggest challenge for agencies.

Attending to the between helps develop an awareness of that which impoverishes relationships, communities and ecosystems. Genuine meeting is about bringing stakeholders together, transcending difference. Bridging those differences achieves proximity and, when achieved, suggests that knowing can be both local and global.. Knowing the mule is thus born of re-specting, of prototyping ways of seeing and attending, of meeting, of dialogical encounter and of developing practices that promote visibility and singularity, that help nurture the better fractional truths, whilst discouraging those that give rise to poor welfare.

In coming to know the mule, the agencies developed awareness of their role in co-creating mule welfare. The stories told by these agencies shifted³³¹ as they incorporated this new awareness, developing mule welfare initiatives, policies and policy implementation strategies. Dialogue has been vitally important in this process for it is through listening that the stories of the oppressed are heard and respected (Freire, 2006, pp. 39; 87-124). The agencies willingness to listen to the mule's story is commendable. It is also clear that, when the same willingness to dialogue is extended to the muleteers, a greater, more holistic understanding of the barriers to better mule welfare will emerge and, with it, a more equitable industry. The reluctance of some agencies to engage in such dialogue perpetuates the cycle of absencing that is characterised by a closed mind in which their one truth dominates and denies the multiple truths of others. Those agencies that have been willing to undertake co-seeing and co-sensing journeys have experienced transformative change.

³³¹ See, for example, the growing importance of the mule in the second edition of "Reasonable Plans: The Story of the Kasbah du Toubkal" compared to the first edition (Workman, 2014; 2011).

CONCLUSION

Knowing another is endless.

The thing to be known grows with the knowing

Nan Shepherd³³²

³³² Shepherd (2008, p. 84)

How do I conclude this study into knowing the mule and ensuring she fares well? Perhaps there can be no conclusion when we are charged with re-specting the other? To conclude implies closure. It is the prelude to action in the objective world of *I-It*. And, whilst necessary in a world of doing and acting, it implies turning away from the *Thou*. I want to emphasise the importance of suspending judgement and holding open the space for genuine meeting and dialogue. I want to emphasise that when this turning away becomes embedded in representational singularity (Law, 2004, p. 137), other possibilities are othered. Downloading and one truth prevail (Scharmer, 2009). This is the cycle of absencing that makes mindless exploitation possible, that justifies not inviting muleteers and mules to meetings, denying them opportunities to contribute to the co-creative project we are engaged in. I must, however, offer a conclusion even if it is to say that we need to be open and curious about how best to know and re-spect the mule. That means learning to listen and attend better, to ourselves to the other and to the ecosystems and communities we are members of.

This thesis has explored how mules are known and their welfare enacted within the different practices that make up mountain tourism. This has been achieved by applying Theory U to the species divide, thereby demonstrating that the dialogical approach can be used to draw nonhumans into the co-creative project that is the mountain tourism expedition and industry. The door to Action Research with animals is, I argue, now open.

Exploring how mules are attended to and the barriers to knowing that get in the way of what Simone Weil describes as ‘absolute attention’ and Richard Rohr and Otto Scharmer describe as ‘presence’, has allowed the sources of these enactments to be better appreciated. Breaking out of silo-thinking has facilitated a shift from ego-system to eco-system awareness (Figure 1.2), exploring how genuine meeting and dialogue can allow welfare to be better negotiated.

To better understand how the mule is known and welfare enacted, it is useful to step back and attempt to see the whole system. Figure 9.1 illustrates what it might be like to see and “sense from the field” as the collage of perspectives comes together and participants “shift the place of listening toward listening from the whole, the common

ground from which all of the instances, stories and quotes arise” (Scharmer, 2009, p. 292).

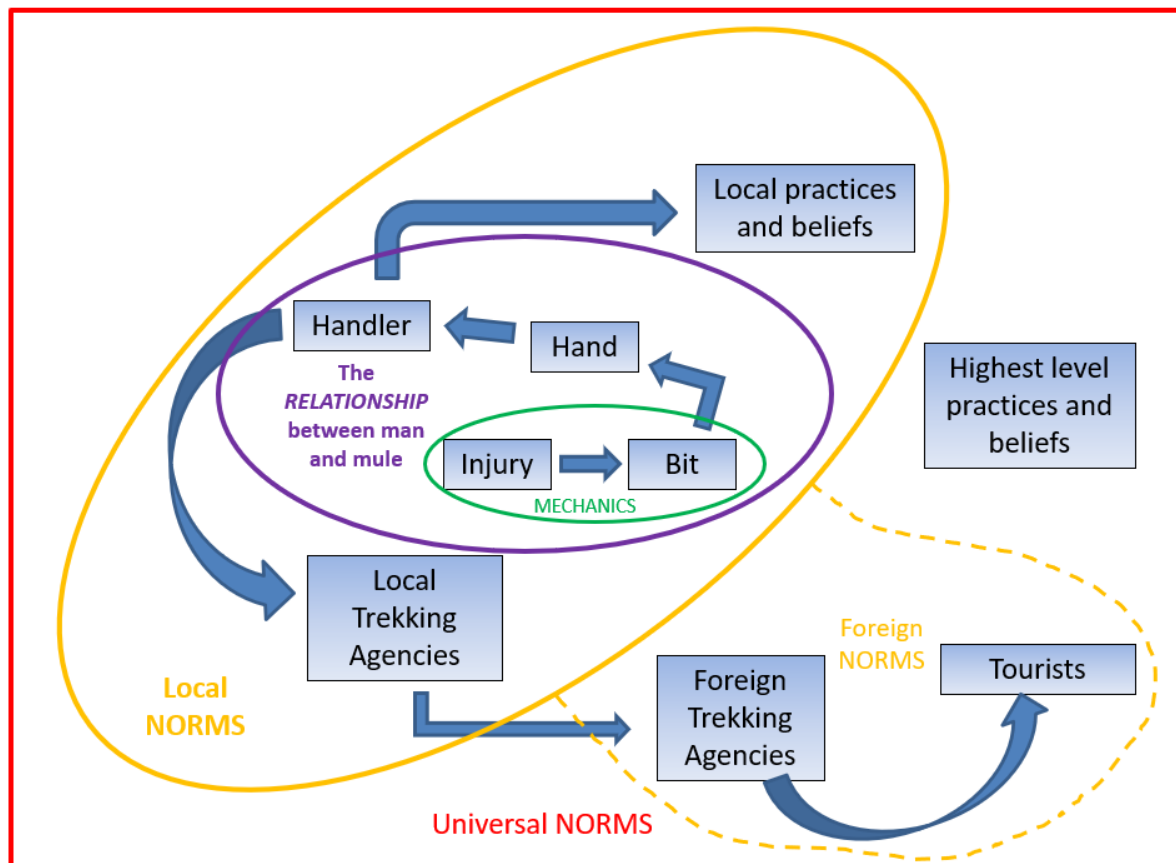


Figure 9.1: Sensing from the whole is what is needed if the system is to see itself and participants develop a community view and understanding of how they have co-created and are collectively responsible for welfare problems such as biting injuries.

The unquestioning acceptance of the traditional Moorish bit as an essential part of the working relationship between humans and equines has been shown to rest on a shaky edifice of assumptions. These not only obscure the mule, they enact a different mule. The centuries-old need for control, the primacy of man’s objectives over the mule’s, a sustained account of what equines are, have all shaped the hinterland that the mule then comes to inhabit. Challenging and reorganising that hinterland “goes against the grain” (Law, 2004, p. 34) and is strongly resisted. It is this resistance that makes it so difficult to reach the bottom of the U and “pass through the eye of the needle” (Scharmer, 2009, pp. 185-186). Overcoming that resistance is part of the U-journey. It

takes us on a journey to the sources of welfare. The deeper journeys have seen different realities brought together within the same holding chamber'. Fractal truths can usually only exist, however, in isolation; bringing them together, facilitating dialogue between them has transformed not just how people listen but the mules they know and the people they themselves are!

"Dialogue has small beginnings, arising from the slightest openings into otherness ... small openings noticed out of awareness." (Scott, 2011, p. 1). Engaging people's curiosity around the bit was such an opening: The community came to appreciate its impact on the mule and see that, in choosing this tool of communication, particular relationships and welfares are enacted, bringing forth particular kinds of mules, muleteers and mule-muleteer dyads. This brutally efficient tool had thus become embedded in a host of narratives that both oppress and obscure the mule. In a battle of adjectives, 'efficient' had won over 'brutal'. Narratives about necessity had othered alternative more equitable and caring possibilities.

Stripping back the assumptions and habits of thought that underpin these justificatory narratives, allowed the *between* to be explored. This meant letting go of everything and being present to the mule and to possibility. It meant accepting that the outcomes of a true encounter are not predetermined but co-created. In doing so, the extent to which mules are objectified and labelled became visible; visible too are the judgements, cynicism and fear of those who fail to attend to and know the mule. These ways of knowing are born of *I-It* encounters and must be contrasted with those arising from *I-Thou* encounters in which mutual reciprocity and dialogue are privileged. Turning to the other, involves relinquishing control, surrendering to the moment and opening to possibility. This willingness must be distinguished from wilfulness. Knowing the mule is something that happens to us through grace (Kramer, 2002, pp. 161-162), it is not something we can do.

If the bit lends itself to control and certainty, it cannot lend itself to genuine meeting and dialogue because this is an uncertain creative process. We should therefore be suspicious of welfare claims about a communication device that is imposed unilaterally rather than co-created (Figure 9.2). If welfare respects mutual flourishing, we need to be more aware of how power inequalities and the relationships they give rise to are

obscured, othered. It is in focussing on the quality of meeting and of the resulting dialogue and co-creative process that we can come to see how welfare is enacted within relationships.

This is so much easier to appreciate when we consider the mule-human relationship and the possibility of union, immanence (Smith, 2011) of the centaur (Game, 2001; Rowan, 2006) that emerges from presence to each other. Where human-to-human encounters are concerned, there is much that gets in the way of such encounters. This thesis has explored how challenging it is to bring together all stakeholders from across the supply chain for them to undertake the co-seeing and co-sensing journeys that deepen their awareness of how they are collectively enacting poor welfare. All too often, the quality of listening curtails the U-journey. Failure to get beyond Level 1&2 listening gives rise to debate and ontological politics. It is only by going beyond this to Level 3&4 listening (Figures 4.2-4.3) and exploring the possibility that ontologies are created in the moment, “constructed or enacted rather than sitting out there waiting to be discovered” (Law, 2003, p. 40) that we start to operate from a different consciousness. And, if this is true of relationships, it is also true of welfare.

This thesis has shown that welfare enactments are products of the limited awareness that each stakeholder has not just of the mule and of mule welfare but of the system(s) they are part of and the realities they co-create. This is an industry with limited awareness of itself because of the field structure of attention from which it is operating and the quality of conversations it is able to have. That this is so becomes clear when we move away from the mule, to the muleteer, the local and foreign agencies and the trekkers and consider the relationships and conversations that these different stakeholders enact together. Returning to the language of Scott Peck (1997), this is an industry trapped in ‘pseudocommunity’ or ‘chaos’, characterised by Level 1&2 listening. According to Peck, to progress beyond this, something (the ego) must die, paving the way to the emergence of true community. This dying equates to Scharmer’s letting go and to Buber’s surrender. What follows the letting go is a period of emptiness (Peck, 1997), presence (Scharmer 2009; Rohr, 2016) or grace (Buber, 2000) from which the emerging future appears. It is my contention that this pathway once found provides a way beyond the ontological politics that arise when *I-It* engagements with the world give rise to multiplicity that must then be debated

Debate is not dialogue. Dialogue implies a return to source to create anew. The journeys undertaken with muleteers and agencies provided opportunities for new awareness to develop and for new ways of relating to the mule to be experienced. Thus, it was possible for people to experience what happens when the field structure of attention shifts from being with and dialoguing (*I-Thou*) to doing and telling (*I-It*). In tracing the quality of the encounter and conversation as we move away from the mule, we come to appreciate that it is possible to see the whole in the part (Bortoft, 2012), to see that poor conversations and relationships (characterised by ignorance, suspicion and fear, singularity and telling) beget themselves, whereas good conversations (characterised by non-judgemental openness, trust and curiosity) promote similarly good dialogical relationships.

Such relationships always imply a willingness to turn the camera back on ourselves (Scharmer, 2009) and change. This helps us appreciate that knowing the mule is more about knowing ourselves than we might suspect. The mule effectively holds up a mirror in which we see ourselves more clearly: including our fears, our desire for control and certainty, our instinctive responses and the assumptions that inform them.

Surrendering control and stepping across the threshold into the unknown is thus a mark of genuine encounter for it implies transformation. By contrast, when we resist the encounter, when we abuse our power in a relationship, without considering our mutual responsibilities, we are already bound for a mismeeting and yet, failing to recognise this, we judge and blame others rather than attend to how we have contributed to the situation through our attitude, intention and attention. There is therefore a fork in the path that we must learn to recognise.

This fork is a turning to the other and to the moment as well as to ourselves. Opening to the other is thus about giving a piece of ourselves to the other and seeing a piece of ourselves in the other to then allow the other to do the same in return (Rohr, 2016, p. 140). It is an opportunity to develop our ability to listen to and understand. Focussing on this practice highlights the possibilities born of such re-specting: the self and the mule that emerge when attending to each other. In the case of the services supply chain that the mule supports, the need for systems that render mule welfare visible is increasingly recognised. This, however, needs to provide an entry point to the U process rather than prompting a defensive response. Encouraging curiosity rather than

judgement, sharing responsibility rather than apportioning blame. In this way, it is possible to address the exploitation of mules and muleteers by the system rather than viewing them in isolation. That is a challenge the industry still needs to take on.

In summary, we should not presume to know, we should seek to know and grow with the knowing. We need to attend well. In attending to the traditional bit and the relationships it enacts, to the *between* that can emerge when privileging genuine dialogue and meeting, to the exploitation not just of the mule but of the muleteer and to the various ways the industry can re-spect the mule and come to take responsibility for her welfare, I have privileged a more equitable set of partial realities. Realities that have become that little bit more real as they have been integrated into and transformed practice.

Law (2004, p. 151) suggests that “if we are to escape the brute singularity of the world ... there will be a need to weave together different goods ... a need to imagine and practise world making as flows ... in which links between different partially connected goods are made and remade”. This study does not presume to make any definitive statements about the tapestry that would be woven of the mule. There are far too many threads, materials, colours, smells, textures, motifs and stories. This study, does, however, propose a few new threads or storylines that are already being woven into the mule’s story. Threads that have either been denied their place in the tapestry or ignored. According them their place and emphasising their importance is a matter of ontological politics where listening is poor. Where genuine meeting and dialogue are promoted, better mule welfare will emerge as a product of the co-creative encounter. This mysterious tapestry creates and provides space for each story to meet and for these stories to be enriched by that encounter for it is through dialogue that a truer account of each protagonist’s journey comes to take its ‘rightful place’. In the same way that the warp carries the carpet and yet remains largely invisible and underappreciated, the mule carries the trekking industry and needs to be cared for by all.

Wheeller (1994) has argued that “tourism will always include an element of exploitation” because the industry is seeking profit and tourists’ self-interest. Whilst this may be true, it does not mean that the voices of the exploited cannot be brought into a space where their stories contribute to dialogue and the co-creation of a better

future in which the partial truths of the powerful are more equitably balanced with those of the powerless.

The shift in norms away from an exploitative, fear-based relationship towards one based on trust, respect and understanding represents a subtle but very real cultural transformation. This is as true of the relationship between muleteers and mules as it is true of the relationship between muleteers and the agencies that exploit them. The U-journey challenges those undertaking the journey to open not just their minds but their hearts to the stories of others. This loving act involves letting go of control, of the primacy of one's own story and letting come whatever wants to emerge. It is about engaging more fully with the ethical and moral treatment of animals by tourists and the tourism industry (Markwell, 2015, p. 293) and creating a space in which we suspend our own culturally constructed, romanticised and otherwise biased stories and listen to the mule's story. As Freire (2006, p. 89) emphasises, however: "dialogue cannot exist in the absence of profound love for the world and for people"; love is "at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself ... and cannot exist in a relation of domination." This path will thus inevitably reveal the inequalities on which the tourism industry is founded and leave us questioning how to rethink our practices. Holidaying may be an invitation to absencing; it is also an invitation to holiday mindfully and to care about the *between*. In tourism, we are increasingly being challenged to travel responsibly and to respect across significant divisions, whether these be religious, cultural, political, economic or founded on species-membership. Re-specting the *between* allows us to do this. In attending to the between we grow our humanity for not only do the boundaries between ourselves and others shift, our own inner boundaries undergo transformative change.

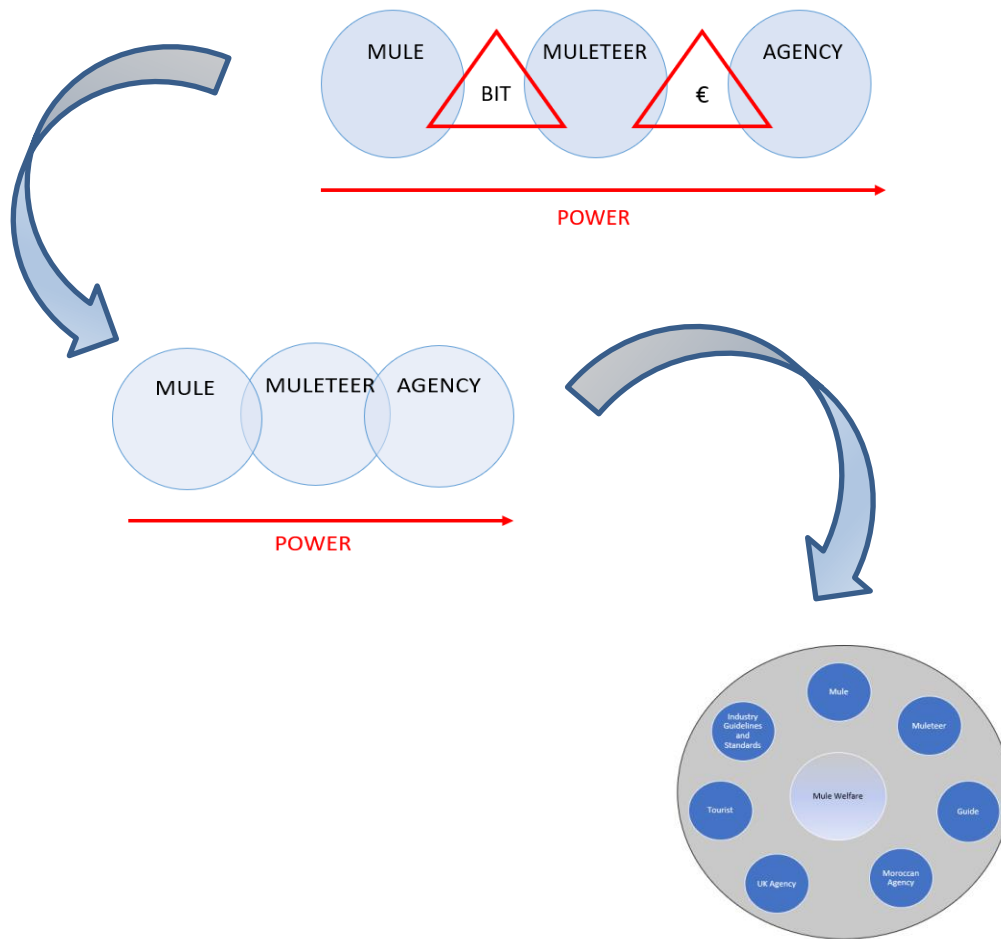


Figure 9.2: The shift away from ego-system awareness and development of eco-system awareness involves genuine meeting and dialoguing so that the between is no longer built on the exploitation of power imbalances but on mutuality and common interest.

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Appendix 1

Glen

Pete Stacey has passed me your email address. I saw your recent post regards Donkeys in Morocco and picked up you are a vet, an IML and now on the BAIML Board. All excellent. I run Far Frontiers Expeditions and have done my stint on the BAIML Board. We send quite a few expeditions annually to Morocco. Indeed we have a couple of groups there as I write. One of our strings is DoE Overseas and we are the no1 provider in UK offering that with much activity going on in Morocco.

We have a separate charity branch called Pukka Projects. We don't promote this much at the moment but all our project money goes through here for transparency and is not funnelled through the main company. We are keen on three major initiatives to support. Turtles, elephants and Donkeys. We haven't yet got anything off the ground with Donkeys.

I love Morocco but hate seeing the treatment of the donkeys there. We have clauses in our contracts with our local suppliers, which stipulate the treatment of the animals on our expeditions. It took some persuasion for them to sign with this in so this is a good step.

There is so much which could/can be done. I have seen the work of some organisations sending vets to help with clinics for locals in Marrakech and this seems to be really good.

I would like to try and do something ourselves and have a budget of £5000-£7000. We thought about paying for local vets to do a regular service from a base in Marrakech, set up a sanctuary in the hills but haven't come up with a good plan yet. We also would like to involve our groups of 16-18 year olds as they come out. Maybe visit for a day and this can help stream continuing contribution funds for what we set up.

The above email was the first piece of correspondence from Chris Short, of Far Frontier Expeditions and came out of the blue.

Appendix 2

They were found not liable because

1) The mules [*sic*] behaviour could not have been predicted. It was an experienced mule, having made many such trips. It had been steady and safe all day and only spooked in the last half an hour of an all day trip. The spook was cause [*sic*] by something unknown although an attempt was made to claim it was caused by a muleteer throwing a stone from behind to make the mule go faster.³³³

2) The practise of not always leading the mule during the trek, instead allowing it to pick its own route, was normal practise with an experienced animal and one that can be said to be suitable as often a guide can get in the way and cause the mule to trip and stumble.³³⁴

3) The young age of the muleteers was not a causal factor given their likely levels of previous experience, and the photos of they [*sic*] riding the mules themselves, lying on the animals back demonstrated that the mules were not know to be “spooky”³³⁵

4) The tack used was “traditional” and could not be expected to have been different, also regardless of tack type, the accident would still have occurred, In the UK where bit use and saddles with stirrups are used, 1 person a month still dies in a horse riding accident and hundreds suffer injuries. In the USA the situation is even worse, 70,000 hospitalisations a year from horse riding accidents primarily because so many people ride without hard hats

³³³ Stone throwing and the use of the threat of stones is common practice locally and reflects the view that mules can be driven like sheep and goats. It unfortunately does not help establish a trusting relationship.

³³⁴ The handler should not be getting in the way of the mule if he is familiar with the mule and able to anticipate difficulties on the path.

³³⁵ The young age of muleteers, their dislike of their work and their tendency to chat among themselves is a problem for it often results in them failing to pay attention.

5) The lady in question had previously ridden and therefore I believe was considered to have been more responsible for choosing not to ride with a safety hat as she could have predicted riding is a dangerous activity

6) Yes the fact that you could at the time not expect to compare health and safety of the [agency] with UK standards was taken into consideration with how you measure responsibility

It is my opinion that the [the agency] escaped only because of the suitability of the mule in question and by the true nature of mules. They would unlikely to be so lucky a second time, I hope that all tourists are now wearing hard hats, or sign a disclaimer if they choose not to do so, that mules are lead throughout the trek, or at least the muleteers are always at the head of the mule of which they are in charge. That muleteers and guides are better trained (which I know through your work they are). That the suitability of mules for the work is carefully assessed based on previous experience and training.³³⁶

³³⁶ Email dated 17/03/2015.

Appendix 4 Standards and codes of best practice

UK Research Integrity Office's Code of Practice for Research.

<http://www.ukrio.org/publications/code-of-practice-for-research/>

Royal College of Veterinary Surgeon's Guide to Professional Conduct.

<http://www.rcvs.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/code-of-professional-conduct-for-veterinary-surgeons/>

BS8848

<http://www.rgs.org/OurWork/Fieldwork+and+Expeditions/BS8848+British+Standard.htm>

<http://www.expeditions.ed.ac.uk/BS%208848.pdf>

<http://2013.outlookexpeditions.com/safety/safety-structure/bs-8848-and-aala>

Mountain Leadership

<http://www.mountain-training.org/walking/awards/mountain-leader>



EPA Guidance Notes

Pack Mule Welfare on Expedition

Purpose

This document is designed to provide EPA Members and Aspirant Members with guidance on the key considerations to take into account when compiling organisational policy and operating procedures pertaining to the safeguarding of pack mule health and welfare on expedition.

Background

The welfare of pack mules and muleteers has been largely ignored by the Mountain Tourism and Expedition industries. Recent research work has allowed those involved in the industry to recognise their responsibilities to the mules and muleteers working on their trips (Cousquer and Allison, 2012; Cousquer, 2015; Schmidt 2015).

Overseas expeditions, and mountain expeditions in particular, make use of local transport provision (including sherpas, porters, pack animals and their handlers). Our responsibilities to sherpas and porters have long been recognised but where pack animals are concerned, the industry has been blind to and ignorant of their suffering. Remote mountain communities are often poor and isolated. The arrival of mountain tourism has resulted in an influx of mules and the growth and development of muleteering. This has happened without the provision of appropriate training and equipment. Consequently, there are many serious welfare concerns arising from a poor understanding of animal behaviour, husbandry, health and welfare.

It is essential that Providers develop an understanding of their responsibilities in safeguarding animal welfare and promoting best practice.

Key Operational Considerations

Providers have a responsibility to put in place policies and a policy delivery plan that ensures mule welfare is safeguarded on expedition. The following notes therefore provide guidance on what companies should have in place prior to travel and what should be done on the ground.

Prior to travel

A. Animal welfare policies

The Provider should make a clear commitment to protecting animal welfare and should develop and publish its policy. As part of such policies, a policy on pack animal welfare is needed. These guidance notes deal specifically with pack mule welfare. Policies should be reviewed and updated to ensure they are up to date and effective.

B. Contracts

The Provider should ensure the safeguarding of pack mule welfare is written into the contract(s) it puts in place with in-country ground handlers (local agents). The contract should ensure both parties work together to develop their understanding of best practice and how to deliver it. A template contract is provided in Appendix 1.

C. Training

The Provider should ensure pack mule welfare training is provided for their operations teams, leaders, in-country guides, muleteers and animal handlers (where other species are used). This will include the provision of appropriate materials and guidance in order to promote awareness of key issues and best practice. Clear guidance will be provided that allows all involved to understand their responsibilities and how to fulfil them.

A template set of leader briefing notes and leader checklist is provided in Appendix 2.

D. Equipment

The Provider should ensure that appropriate equipment is provided for the pack mules working on their expeditions and should insist and ensure that it is used. Clear guidance should be provided to ensure equipment is well maintained and does not cause pain, injury or suffering (either physical and / or mental) to the animal.

Guidance on the equipment to be used when working with pack mules is provided below under the in practice (on the ground) section.

On the ground

In practice, policies must be carefully implemented on the ground to ensure that all key welfare issues are addressed. These typically include poor animal relations and handling, overloading, lameness and wounds (especially those arising from equipment that promotes control rather than communication and those arising from ill-fitting, poorly maintained pack saddles and harnesses).

A. Good communication

The Provider should make a clear commitment to promoting good relations and good communication between pack mules and their handlers. This means clamping down on relations and communication that depend on pain, fear and other negative enforcement. Instead, relations and communication based on trust, respect, understanding and affection should be promoted.

Providers must ensure inhumane (traditional) bits are never used. Instead, pack mules should be worked in head collars with nothing in their mouths. Local muleteering teams should be supported in developing their ability to work mules effectively in head collars through on-going training.

B. Body Condition

The Provider should ensure pack mules are in good body condition. Local agents (ground handlers) should be expected to provide healthy mules. Expedition leaders will be expected to have a bareback inspection of all mules prior to loading and departure. This involves removing the packsaddle to visualise the mule and the mule's back.

Providers should have an agreed system in place with ground handlers and expedition leaders as to what action is taken if a mule is presented unfit for work. This should ensure that thin, emaciated, weak, old mules (who are more vulnerable to wounds, to falls and to injury) are not worked on expedition.

C. Pack Animal Loads

Pack mule loads have to be managed. It is impractical to give weight guidance for loads (due to problems associated with weighing for example). The most practical system is therefore to agree ratios of pack animals to clients; these will vary according to the amount of additional equipment used on camping treks.

In the case of mules, Providers will agree beforehand numbers of mules for each expedition in relation to client numbers. Expedition leaders will know prior to a trip departure how many mules are allocated for that trip. Appendix 3 provides guidance on mule numbers.

Providers must ensure that the riding of loaded pack mules is prohibited. Stating a maximal load (80kg for mules) can help to further clarify what the ratio is seeking to achieve.

D. Wound Prevention

Providers should expect pack mules to be worked, handled and managed in ways that do not cause wounds.

Providers should ensure that wounds do not arise from tethering, pack saddles and other harnessing equipment. This means developing local team's understanding of best practice and ensuring they have access to and use appropriate equipment and that this is well fitted, well maintained and used correctly.

Where tethering is practised, only humane tethers should be used. Mules should never be tethered using thin rope, string, twine or other inappropriate materials. See Cousquer, 2016.

Grooming of mules and other pack animals should be part of the daily routine (both at the start and end of the day). This is an essential part of the assessment process and allows developing sores to be identified early. It also promotes good relations, stimulates blood flow at the end of the day and helps the back under the pack saddle (saddle blanket) to recover. Grooming prior to loading, coupled with appropriate care and cleaning of the pack saddle, helps minimise the risk of rubs and sores developing. Mule handlers are responsible for the grooming but should be provided with appropriate equipment (e.g. plastic brushes).

E. Food and water

Providers should ensure that adequate provision is made for the animal's food and water to ensure a healthy, balanced diet. This should meet the energy and nutritional requirements imposed on the animal when working on expedition.

Providers should ensure that on-going education is provided to promote understanding of a mule's nutritional needs and how to meet them. It is, for example, particularly important that grazing (rather than concentrates) be provided to ensure the mule's teeth and digestive systems are kept healthy. Checks should be made by expedition leaders to check that mules are receiving adequate food and water to ensure this issue is more transparent.

Providers should work with in-country agents to ensure feeding and watering facilities (e.g. troughs) are built and maintained at regular camping sites. Providers can consider such animal welfare projects as appropriate community projects.

F. Training and Education for Animal Handlers

Providers need to make provision for animal handlers to be trained in pack animal husbandry and care. This should be done in collaboration with ground handlers and specialists in animal health and welfare.

In the case of mules, Providers should expect their teams to have regular training to help develop and improve their muleteering practice. The development of best practice needs to be supported through workshops and reflective learning. Training should focus on the development of practical skills and applied knowledge. Issues to be covered include mule handling and behaviour, wound prevention, harness maintenance and repair, nutrition, health care and first aid.

Muleteers should be supplied with pictorial guidelines (Appendix 4) to help develop their understanding of what is and is not acceptable.

G. First Aid and Health Care

Providers should ensure that sick or injured mules receive appropriate first aid and know how to organise veterinary care locally. An appropriate pack mule first aid kit should be carried by each team of muleteers. A system should be in place to ensure the kit is fully stocked and always carried within the group. Training in animal first aid and in the use of the first aid kit should be considered.

In the case of a mule suffering an accident, injury, sickness or other emergency, the expedition leader should know who to contact locally to ensure appropriate care is provided. In many cases local animal charities and animal health professionals are available and can be called on for assistance.

When a mule is injured while working for a Provider, the Provider should consider themselves responsible for the cost of animal care and treatment. Provision for the transportation to the health care provider is also the responsibility of the provider. This recognises that transportation and health care provision is not solely the responsibility of animal owners.

In the case of mules, falls resulting in leg fractures and other injuries are commonplace. Providers must ensure these are dealt with. This may mean organising for the animal to be euthanased or transported for treatment. In Morocco, for example, the charity SPANA can be contacted for assistance. Their contact details should be included in leader packs (See Appendix 2).

H. Leader Checks and Reports

Providers should ensure an animal welfare report is included in the leaders post expedition report. Individual animals and animal handlers should be identified by name in the report; this ensures that Providers' awareness of what is happening on the ground is promoted. (See Appendix 5 for a sample leader report).

References and Resources

Cousquer and Allison 2012 – The Mountain Guide's and expedition leader's ethical responsibilities to pack animals on expedition. *Annals of Tourism Research*. 39 (4), 1839-1858.

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